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History of religion in the United States

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**THE HISTORY OF RELIGION  
IN THE UNITED STATES**





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TORONTO

# The History of Religion in the United States

BY

HENRY KALLOCH ROWE, P.H.D.

PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HISTORY IN THE  
NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION

277.3

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To  
JOHN FRANKLIN JAMESON  
WHO TAUGHT ME  
TO STUDY AND TEACH HISTORY

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## PREFACE

Among the social factors that have shaped America, religion holds a prominent place. It is overshadowed at times by the economic challenge flung by a new continent in the face of Europe. It is subordinated to political issues in the writing of history, to social interpretations in literature. It has never been obtrusive in claiming for itself the center of the stage. Yet nothing in American history is more remarkable than the growth of great denominational churches, gaining in membership faster than the rapid gain in population, and the pervasive interest in religion that is evident in American society through all the years of national growth.

The history of religion in America never has been written adequately. As in other countries, it has been treated exclusively as a history of the church and from the clerical point of view, or it has been dismissed by secular historians in a few paragraphs. The religious phases of American history deserve broad and sympathetic interpretation. In the making of a free and democratic nation, religion has played no mean part; at the same time it has been a conserving, constructive force, holding fast to that which seemed valuable in the past and refashioning it for a new environment and a new age, and it has made chief contribution to that idealism which is credited to America even by those who scoff at her worship of Mammon.

The significance of religion in American history has been its gradual emancipation from the institutionalism and tradition of the Old World. Coming from Europe, the colonists brought as a part of their heritage the ideas and



forms of a religion that was shackled by tradition among Protestants as well as among Catholics. The power of that tradition could not be shaken off easily. The European peoples never have succeeded in large numbers in the organization of free churches or the transformation of religious ideas. In America it became possible to think and act more unconventionally.

Three phases of emancipation appeared in succession. The first phase was emancipation from the authority of a state church. This came about, both North and South, by the end of the colonial period. During the same time the Puritan churches and their dissenting kin abandoned the conventional polity of the Anglican Church out of which they had come. The second phase was emancipation from the formal worship and preaching of the earlier divines, and an inrush of emotional evangelism from the time of Wesley and Whitefield intermittently to Moody and the popular preachers of a half century ago. The third phase was emancipation from the traditional ideas of a Protestant orthodoxy, best represented by Calvin, beginning late in the eighteenth century and continuing with much controversy to the present time.

This interpretation by no means exhausts the story of the religious process; it does indicate something of its importance. The present writer is attempting merely an essay in interpretation. It is his hope that it may help to create a larger interest in the rich field of the history of American religion.

HENRY KALLOCH ROWE.

Newton Centre, Massachusetts,  
September, 1924.

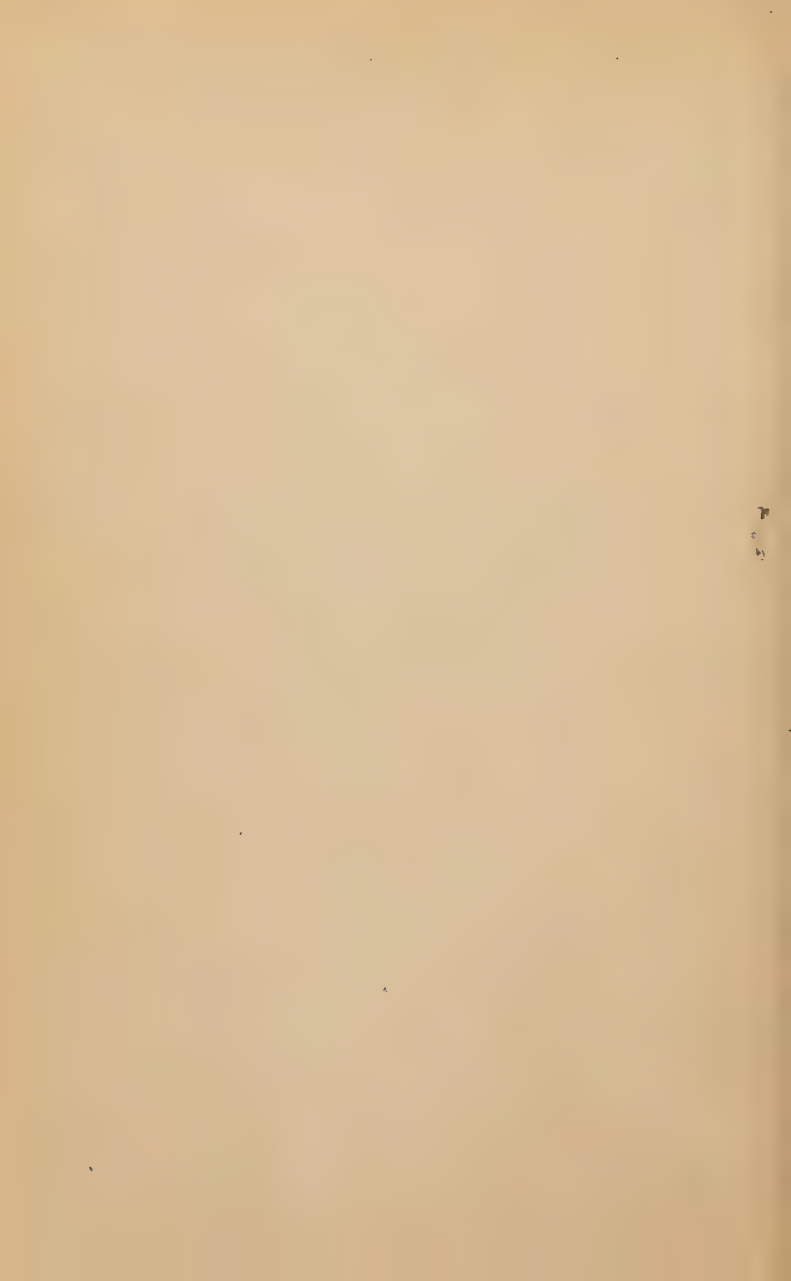
## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE HERITAGE FROM OVERSEAS . . . . .	1
II MASSACHUSETTS EXPERIMENTS . . . . .	17
III TENDENCIES TOWARDS LIBERALISM . . . . .	32
IV THE CONSEQUENCES OF FREEDOM . . . . .	52
V RELIGION ON THE FRONTIER . . . . .	72
VI ADVENTURES IN ALTRUISM . . . . .	90
VII THE RELIGIOUS MIND IN THE MAKING . . . . .	104
VIII RATIONALIZING RELIGION . . . . .	122
IX SOCIALIZING RELIGION . . . . .	141
X SPIRITUALIZING RELIGION . . . . .	158
XI THE CHURCHES . . . . .	174
XII TENDENCIES TOWARDS UNITY . . . . .	193



THE HISTORY OF RELIGION  
IN THE UNITED STATES





# THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES

## I. THE HERITAGE FROM OVERSEAS

JUTTING into the cold waters of the North Atlantic the island of Newfoundland faces the Old World like the prow of a continent. Against it beat the impatient tides that sweep unchecked over leagues of ocean. Storms strike remorselessly on sea and shore, and thick fogs obscure them without warning. Down the Labrador coast drift the icebergs, sweeping majestically past the island prow to melt into the warm currents from the south. Winter broods long months over the land, and shrouds the dangerous sea with Arctic night. So forbidding is Nature's frown that it seems as if she meant that there should be no thoroughfare to the north.

Yet into the icy seas that lie still farther north seafaring Norsemen came as early as the tenth century, made settlement in Greenland, and scouted to the mainland on adventure bent. Freebooting adventurers they were, balking at the Arctic no more than at the Mediterranean, ready to trade with the natives if they saw hope of gain, or as ready to fight if it better served their will. They had broken away from the control of European civilization before it had fully laid its hand upon them, but civilization followed them. With it came the ecclesiastical system to which they belonged. Priests of the Catholic church wrestled against Norse superstitions, or in discouragement accommodated their creeds to the simple minds of the settlers. The Pope of Rome appointed a bishop in Green-

land for the cure of American souls. Churches, a cathedral, even monasteries were evidences that the mediæval faith of Europe was becoming acclimated on the edge of the Old World. But settlements and church alike failed to make permanent conquest of the northern approaches to America. Mismanagement of the trade that had sprung up with settlement, hostility of the native Skraellings, and not least of all the rigor of the climate, combined to bring disaster, and the Norse chapter in American history came to an end.

East of Newfoundland lie the Grand Banks, where cod swarmed long before fishermen knew of their whereabouts. But fish was in good demand in European markets, and hardy French and Portuguese sailors could scent the cod as surely as the modern prospector can see traces of oil. Not far from the time when Norsemen ceased to be heard, from Jersey and Breton and Portuguese fishermen might have been seen there tossing on the swell of the ocean, if the fog was not too thick to distinguish ship from shore. They dared the long voyage across the Atlantic, braved the perils of fog and shore, dried their catch on the rocks, and packed it away for the voyage home, because they knew that back there millions of good Catholics would patronize the fish market on days when meat was forbidden, and that the Newfoundland trade would be profitable, even though it was distant and dangerous. They were good Catholics themselves, and when the fog fell without warning and they had to grope their way blindly over the Banks, they piously crossed themselves and put up a prayer to the Virgin, though in the same breath they swore lustily when their boats ran afoul of one another.

From the prow of Newfoundland the continent falls away a thousand miles to Florida. Off that southern shore, Columbus, an Italian mariner in the employ of the sovereigns of Spain, sighted another island in 1492, and went ashore to raise the standard of the same Cross that the Norse adventurer and the Breton fisherman venerated,

and to offer his thanksgivings to the same Virgin. Like the other voyagers, he was an adventurer, but a good Catholic did not forget his religion in the midst of his occupations. After pleasant cruising in the warm southern seas Columbus returned, not with a cargo of ill-smelling fish, but with a wonderful story of discovery and a promise of gold to the future explorer.

While Spaniards listened with mouths agape to the strange tale of western discovery and French housewives were dickering at the market for the salt codfish, the savage Indians of America and their half-barbarous Mexican cousins roamed the woods and fields or went about their occupations in the centers of population, as their fathers had done before them, little dreaming that an ocean highway had been explored that would bring them into fatal contact with another hemisphere, where men jostled one another in the streets, strove for the prizes of industry, and made gestures of interest in another world on Sundays and holy days. The Indians enjoyed the freedom of broad ranges, fought rather than traded for what they wished, and practiced their own magic arts of religion. Their animistic beliefs were not very different from those of other peoples in the same stage of culture. They had their spirits to venerate, as the Christians had their saints. They had their ceremonies and incantations, and their medicine men to placate the evil spirits that they feared. They had queer interpretations of their experiences and of the powers that seemed to control them, and they looked with anticipation to a future existence in happier hunting grounds.

The contacts with America that had been made both North and South came at a time when Europe was astir with energy. While fishermen and explorers were trying their fortunes in western waters, and Indians were roaming over their ample acres, the people of Europe were entering upon a period of high adventure that was to sweep multitudes of them from their old moorings. They

#### 4 THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE U. S.

had lived long under the static conditions of mediæval life. They had thought in the old grooves. Their orbits of life were contracted. Children were born on the rural manor, grew to maturity without schooling, inherited the hard lot of peasants, worked, drank and gossiped in their small village, and died without ever going more than a few miles from home. Within the limits of a market town artisans plied their crafts, and traders bought and sold, but only occasionally went farther afield to a district fair. In any case they had little interest in the larger social relations. They were governed locally by a lord of the manor, more remotely by a sovereign whom they never saw, but they felt little sense of political obligation, except for the payment of taxes and an occasional service. Aside from their daily routine their almost sole interest was in religion. In their ignorance they were extremely superstitious. Much of their limited experience they could not understand. They lived in fear of unfriendly supernatural powers. Expecting a future life, they dreaded the untried experience. They believed what the village priest told them about it, and according to him the chances of suffering were vastly greater than the chance of bliss, and the only way to escape was to follow implicitly the directions of the church. There was only one church, the church that their ancestors had known, the church that for centuries had taken its orders from Rome. The peasant and his lord, the town artisan and the village burgher, the laity and the clergy everywhere were parts of an ecclesiastical system that claimed, and most of the time exercised, absolute authority over the minds of kings and serfs. This absolutism was possible because it was necessary for present safety and future salvation to belong to the System, for the church controlled the road to Heaven, but the church was growing unpopular, because its methods were sometimes unscrupulous and the tolls laid upon the wayfarers were frequent and heavy.

The church, with other institutions of a static social



system, was caught in a wave of progressive change dating from the twelfth century. By the inevitable laws of social causation a new era was in process of creation. The Norse adventurers in Greenland and Vineland were too early to share in it, but their spirit of adventure was akin to it. The Breton fisherman on the Banks did not sense it, because his mind was not in the current of intellectual change, though he was a pioneer on new seas. The Spaniards who accompanied and followed Columbus were defenders of the old mediæval order, even while they explored and exploited a new continent. But in Europe kings and scholars, merchants and priests, caught the ground swell of the new era. Sovereigns consolidated their territories; nations came to birth. With increasing power kings were able to tax the merchants for their coin, and to organize armies that were not dependent on the fickle good will of feudal retainers. Money was increasing in abundance with the increase of travel, the expansion of avenues of trade, and the growth of busy centers of population where manufacturing and commerce naturally increased in volume. Thought was stimulated by the contacts of keen minds in the universities that sprang up wherever groups of scholars gravitated together.

Under the spur of these tendencies men ventured forth on new paths. Kings and their ambitious ministers dreamed and schemed for empire, until Charles of Spain, the most successful of them, had become Emperor of all the Germanies as well as titular sovereign of a vast Spanish domain. Merchant adventurers organized great trading companies and tapped the resources of lands on the border of civilization. Students ventured into intellectual fields beyond those limited areas of scholastic discussion in which the mediæval schoolmen browsed. Priests and even laymen made new ventures of faith beyond the confines that had been mapped out by the church. Waldensians in the Latin lands, Anabaptists in middle Europe, Lollards in England, dared to question the teaching and the

ecclesiastical authority of Rome, and early in the sixteenth century Germany was aflame with ecclesiastical revolt under the bold leadership of Martin Luther.

Religious revolt cut across the whole fabric of society. Religion was the one thing that all men had in common, the one bond that held them together as it held them to the past. It seemed too sacred to touch, and the church that represented it claimed to be immune to criticism, but the mind of the new age, keen and far ranging, did not spare the foibles and failures of an institution that was hoary with age and respectability, and as part of a social system that was passing Catholicism had to meet the attacks of determined reformers.

In the very year when Cortez was pushing the Spanish advance into Mexico Martin Luther with his followers<sup>r</sup> was challenging the church to a trial of strength in Germany. Spanish discoverers and Newfoundland fishermen might be content to take the conventional religion of their native lands, but while they were voyaging in the West bold adventurers in the region of faith were making discoveries that were to affect the world no less powerfully than the discovery of a new continent. As Columbus, defying the popular opinions of his time, trusted himself to the trade winds that bore him steadily westward, and opened a pathway over the high seas to a New World, so the Saxon monk, standing alone in the German city of Worms before the assembled dignitaries of church and state, dared to defy the conventional religious opinions of his day, and relying on his personal faith in God rather than in the kind offices of the church, blazed a new way to Heaven for half of Europe. The first was the discovery of a larger physical world, the other of a new world of thought and spiritual experience. The geographical discoveries of Columbus made Europe and the Mediterranean seem small; the religious discovery of Luther dwarfed the narrow arena in which the mind had trodden the treadmill of its conventional thought. Each of these men had his

forerunners, each his broad-visioned successors, but from these two onward the static age of mediævalism definitely lay behind. Ahead was the surge of modern life.

The new era of thought did not disturb the first American pioneers. Gentlemen adventurers were absorbed in facing the dangers and hunting for the treasures that America offered. They mapped its shores, penetrated its hinterland, plundered its natives, and with equal zeal pressed after the spoil of its mines and the elusive elixir of its fountains of youth. They prepared the way for those who would fare forth later and marry the virgin land and sink the roots of their European civilization in its fertile soil. Spanish noblemen took with them their Catholic priests to plant the banner of the Cross alongside the banner of Spain, for their religion was a part of the equipment of their Latin civilization. They had a pious wish to extend their system of ecclesiastical insurance to the pagan natives, and under their auspices Franciscan friars penetrated the far interior of the Southwest as missionaries, but Spanish piety did not prevent fighting with the pueblo Indians of the interior, looting the property of Peruvian and Mexican chiefs, and condemning the Indians to work in the mines as slaves. A century later French voyageurs into Canada took with them their Catholic confessors, and devoted Jesuit missionaries pushed into the interior to propagate their faith among the natives of the North. But neither Spain nor France accomplished results, material or spiritual, that were commensurate with the energy of the pathfinders, though they performed the useful task of blazing trails both North and South.

The failure of Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries to accomplish permanent results was not due to their indolence or unfaithfulness. The annals of their missions are filled with heroism as inspiring as any that missionary history affords. They explored unknown territory over an astonishingly wide area, pushed into native villages at the

peril of their lives, picked up as much as they could of the language and preached to the people, gathered converts for instruction, and tried to explain to unwilling listeners the meaning of the Christian faith. But in the South the harsh demands of the Spaniards alienated the Indians, who honored the Christian religion and its missionaries only as long as they were kept in awe of political authority, and in the North the savages tortured and killed the Jesuit fathers in spite of the efforts of the missionaries to tame them.

Meantime other persons were making intellectual explorations in Europe. With zeal equal to American explorers German, Dutch, and English adventurers along the new reaches of thought sloughed off the restrictions of the philosophy, science and theology of the Middle Ages, and struck out boldly in new directions. Humanism flourished in the schools of the growing towns. Books were multiplied by means of new printing devices. Fresh delight came from the pages of the pagan classics, and a new insight into the meaning of religion from the pages of the New Testament. Pioneers broke new paths for the feet of pilgrims to the Holy City. Luther and Calvin and Knox and Cranmer mapped out the confines of the new faith and the channels of grace, and denied the divine rights of a Catholic church that claimed a monopoly of religion.

The seventeenth century focused these two ventures, the spiritual and the temporal, upon the Atlantic coast of North America. The high tide of European thought and activity swept across the ocean, as the waters at their flood dashed against the prow of the continent at Newfoundland. The ventures were prophetic of a new energy and independence that were to characterize the people of the New World. Time was to reveal a wealth of material resources that have made the Spanish mines seem pygmies, an industry and invention that have surpassed the wonder of the discovery of America, and a moral and religious develop-

ment that has gone far beyond the adventuring thoughts of sixteenth century pioneers.

The American explorations of the sixteenth century were succeeded by the colonizing enterprises of the seventeenth. Spain and France, both Catholic nations, had tried to transplant their Latin civilization and their old faith into the new regions and had failed, save on the borders north and south. Their methods were not efficient. They were to find spheres of activity where they could develop their own institutions, but they were not to share permanently in opening up those temperate regions of North America that awaited the dynamic activity of the Teuton and the Celt. In the new century the Protestant Dutch and Swedes and English, aided by many Germans, French, and Scotch-Irish, made their successful attempts along the coast from Maine to Florida. Holland on the Hudson and Sweden on the Delaware established commercial enterprises which might have been permanent, if each had been unmolested, but the Dutch absorbed the Swedes and then had to yield to the superior power of the English, for they ventured their undertakings at a time when England was driving forward for the same prize. England had gained a new national unity during the long reign of Elizabeth, and a remarkable energy, coupled with an increasing fund of commercial capital to apply to new economic opportunities, made it possible for her to succeed where her rivals failed. Enterprising capitalists organized commercial companies to exploit the latent wealth of America, planned colonies as bases of trade, and found colonists both from the British Isles and from the Continent who for economic, social, or religious reasons were willing to expatriate themselves three thousand miles away.

Religion had a part in the colonization of America, but it was not the dominant factor. In certain colonies it was the primary concern of the majority of the emigrants, but even in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, where the



## 10 THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE U. S.

religious factor was strongest, many persons did not share the spiritual concern of the promoters of the colony, and even the church leaders felt the inducements to material gain.

No one social factor is the key to the interpretation of the history of America. Economic necessity, social pressure, the spirit of adventure, the scourge of persecution, all were among the driving forces that urged men and women overseas, sent them out along the advancing frontiers, and determined the nature of their occupations and environment. Religion was prominent among these factors, because it was so dynamic an element in the European life of the period. As the mediæval man of whatever social grade regarded religion as his most vital concern, inasmuch as eternity was infinitely longer than earthly time, and submissively obeyed the word of the priest, so, the modern man, emancipated from sacerdotal thralldom and sure that the Protestant path was the only way to Heaven, was prepared to sacrifice everything else, if necessary, for the satisfaction of his soul. Religious differences were the cause of bitterness in communities, even in households. They caused civil strife and foreign wars. The losers felt the heavy hand of persecution, and they took flight abroad. Even where persecution amounted to little more than denunciation of heresy or the prevention of unconventional religious practices, dissenters felt the irksomeness of the situation, and were glad to expatriate themselves, especially if there was a fair prospect of economic gain at the same time.

The history of the Protestant Reformation makes it plain that human motives are always mixed. Those who called themselves Protestants accepted the new thought, sometimes because their emotions responded to a revolutionary preacher, sometimes because they found new Bible teachings that appealed to their reason, sometimes because their neighbors were accepting the change, sometimes because they hated the priest or disliked to pay for the old

ecclesiastical system. Princes and merchants supported the religious revolution in some cases because they saw hope of larger revenues for themselves if the tribute of the faithful stopped flowing to Rome. Expediency counted with them more than conviction. Individuals there were who so delighted in their emancipation from the control of the priest that they objected to all law. They did not hesitate to modify the forms of their creeds, their organizations and their worship, and then they conceived of the modification of government and the social order. In their new freedom from overhead authority and under the influence of popular demagogues they yielded to the ferment of ideas and broke into social as well as religious revolution. Large numbers of men and women got a genuine new vision of personal religion; though they threw off the authority of the old ecclesiastical system, they did not lose their loyalty to God, and they found in the Bible the guidance that they had been accustomed to look for from the priest. They were peaceable and orderly. Both kinds of Protestants were to be found among the Anabaptists of Germany in the sixteenth century, and again among the Puritans of England in the seventeenth century, but the disorderly sort gave an excuse to the political authorities to interfere with the freedom of the Protestant movement, and to bring it under national authority. The regulators tried to stabilize religion by standardizing doctrines and practices through church councils, organizing ecclesiastical systems as virtually departments of state, and insisting on conformity to the will of the sovereign. Within a century from Luther's declaration of religious independence at Worms the nations of northern Europe had completed this standardizing process by nationalizing religion.

When, therefore, the Dutch emigrated to New Netherland they took with them their Reformed church; when Sweden sent her colonials to Delaware, they transplanted their Lutheranism; when England established her first

permanent settlement in Virginia, the Church of England was a part of the establishment. When England at a later time appropriated the territory of her rivals, she extended over it her ecclesiastical authority. This arbitrary method was in harmony with the autocratic methods of government that prevailed, but it did not tend to vitalize religion, and it provoked dissent.

The religious history of the colonial period in America can be understood only as these two factors of authority and dissent are kept in mind. The conservative principle of ecclesiastical standardization and authority received recognition in most of the colonies. Although Catholicism had lost prestige in Europe, and was to have an inconspicuous place in the English colonies of America, the Catholic principle of external authority in religion survived in the Church of England. Hence in most of the colonies the people supported the church that was established for all; yet in the same colonies was an insurgent element that magnified its right of dissent. Mingled with the practical undertaking of subduing a new continent is the effort of either party to subdue the will of the other to a religious principle.

The care of religion appears as a function of government from the beginning of successful English colonization in Virginia. The Company under whose auspices the venture was made was not indifferent to the religious interests of the settlers. The initial settlement at Jamestown had its Anglican chaplain, and before his departure from England to the governorship of Virginia Lord Delaware was admonished "to look not at the gain, the wealth, the honor, but at those high and better ends that concern the kingdom of God," and to "take the devil prisoner in open field and in his own kingdom." The observance of religious obligations by the settlers was made compulsory. Citizens were expected to be members of the colonial church, and provision was made for church lands and the support of ministers. But it was not the religious motive

that sent the first settlers to Virginia. The men of social rank who became owners of estates, and the indentured servants and other laborers or handicraftsmen, were willing to give nominal adherence to the church, and to attend its services when not too inconvenient, but religion did not claim precedence among their interests. The Virginia council requested the assistance of the Bishop of London, and his spiritual jurisdiction was recognized thereafter. The official church in Virginia was handicapped by lack of a sufficient number of ministers and by the poor quality of most of those who came out from England. This was due partly to the meager support offered by the Virginia people. Citizens were not deeply religious and were glad to escape from clerical admonitions. They paid salaries in tobacco, often of a poor quality and value. Ministers were left dependent on the good will of their local vestries as there was no bishop's authority to check up conditions. It was unfortunate also that the Church of England was not insistent upon spiritual qualifications as prerequisite to ministerial ordination. Too many men were in orders to provide themselves with an easy living. Some of the most worthless of them drifted to the colonies. It is not strange that Virginia parsons were charged with being fonder of English sports than of studying Sunday sermons. If a man was conscientious, his parish was likely to prove too large for efficient oversight. The result of all these conditions was that people, scattered on their plantations, went to church infrequently, and religion was generally neglected. Indifference to religion and the meager supply of clergymen continued until the Revolutionary war, when Episcopacy narrowly escaped destruction along with the government of the mother country.

The colonial church of Virginia greatly needed a bishop who could have proper oversight of the local parishes and could discipline the clergy. That was one of the valuable assets of the episcopal system. Occasional efforts were made to secure such appointment, but the opposition of

clergy or government prevented. In lieu of a bishop James Blair, a Scotchman, went out in 1689 to represent the Bishop of London with the title of commissary. It was his job to visit and inspect parishes and tone up the character of religion. He fitted admirably into the local situation, and proved to be one of the most useful men in the colonial churches of America during a period of more than fifty years. Very early he saw the need of a training school for prospective clergy; his influence brought about the founding of the College of William and Mary, and he was made its first president. The student body was small; especially was it difficult to induce young men to enter the ministry when it was necessary to make an expensive and uncomfortable voyage to England for ordination.

In Maryland the reputation of the Anglican clergy was worse even than in Virginia. As late as 1753 a visiting clergyman wrote to the Bishop of London: "It would really, my lord, make the ears of a sober heathen tingle to hear the stories that were told me by many serious persons of several clergymen in the neighborhood of the parish where I visited." They had such an ill reputation in other colonies that an unusually bad minister was referred to scornfully as a "Maryland parson." Thomas Bray, who became commissary, sailed to the colony from England with intentions similar to those of Blair in Virginia. Before leaving he had collected parish libraries for the clergy, and once there he attempted to purify and strengthen the churches, but unfortunately ecclesiastical circumstances shortly compelled his return to England. His most permanent contribution to religion in America was his influence in the organization of two missionary agencies in England, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which were useful in the spread of knowledge and in missionary activity among negroes and Indians as well as among colonists in America.

The character of the Anglican clergy in the colonies



that were established farther south was more exemplary. They worked hard at teaching school as well as conducting church services, and gave moral and spiritual counsel to negro slaves and Indians as willingly as to white citizens. This fact made the official church of the royal colonies in that section less obnoxious, and the people were more generous in their support. The Church of England represented to them the institutional life and civilization of the mother country. But the experience of the South generally with the Church of England was not favorable to a church establishment. There were times when colonial officials meddled, and such interference was always possible. The governor was supposed to be the patron of the church, and he gave it social standing. The legislature could tax the people for the support of the church, and this benefit was not shared by dissenting bodies. Yet the church lost more than it gained from these connections and privileges. Especially did it suffer from the absence of a bishop to confirm the young people in church membership and to ordain a native clergy. Far better would it have been to throw the colonial churches on their own responsibility, permitting them to grow vigorous through self-reliance. As it was they were kept in leading strings with very ineffective guidance.

In the absence of a satisfactory colonial church dissenting groups began to collect from an early time. Various representatives of English Puritanism made their way to the Southern colonies. Puritanism should be remembered as a movement of dissent before it crystallized into an institution with authority. Presbyterians and Baptists went into Maryland and Virginia, and found footing in the Carolinas. Quakers ventured into Virginia about the time they suffered in Boston. They were fined and imprisoned, but persisted. George Fox journeyed in the Southern colonies, and people listened appreciatively to men who had the spirit of religion in them. Quarterly and yearly meetings provided permanent organization.

At a later time Methodists were welcomed before they had separated from the Church of England. They had spiritual fervor, but they belonged to the church of their fathers. There were several Huguenot groups; a company of Germans settled above the falls of the Rappahannock formed a useful frontier guard; Georgia had a mixed population of Continental sectarians as well as Englishmen. Against the opposition of the ecclesiastical system of the Southern royal colonies the principle of dissent maintained itself, sometimes quietly, again vigorously, until the Revolution, when in the stronghold of Virginia itself the established principle of authority in religion yielded to the principle of freedom. Meantime other experiments were being staged in an effort to compromise between the Old World principle of a state church and the New World doctrine of ecclesiastical independence.

## II. MASSACHUSETTS EXPERIMENTS

THE principle of overhead authority in religion fastened itself generally upon the English colonies in the North as in the South. It proved difficult, even for the Puritans, to throw off at once the inherited ideas of centuries. The Puritans who settled Massachusetts Bay were the progressives of the English Reformation. Not content with the changes that had been made in the forms of the national religion, they were determined to purify the church further by eliminating such survivals of Catholicism as the use of the cross in worship, the surplice in the dress of the clergy, and the ring in marriage. A few went so far as to become Independents in religion. But most of them were not so radical in purpose as to wish to disestablish the national church. Some of them preferred presbyters to bishops, but most of them would conform, whatever failure might happen to their program. Puritanism is important in history, therefore, as an attitude of protest against abuses in a system that was regarded as essentially good rather than a definitely planned secession from the system. The story of the process by which English Puritanism became transformed into New England Congregationalism is illustrative of the slow emancipation of the American mind from its English inheritance.

Puritanism has been defined so many times that it seems superfluous to coin new phrases, but it is important to remember that it was of greater consequence as an attitude than as an institution. As an instrument of government it proved a failure both in England and America. As a moral censorship it was too stern, and provoked an unwholesome reaction. As an interpretation of religion

## 18 THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE U. S.

it was too narrowly theological, and too out of sympathy with an abounding life. But as an attitude of mind towards the ecclesiastical system that had been taken over without substantial change from Catholicism, it was a healthful ferment in old English society.

The Puritan attitude was not that of the bulk of Englishmen. In every day life most persons were far more interested in making a living than in discussing religious doctrines and practices, and claiming a right to their own opinions. Religious leaders might dispute about the merits of Calvinism, Arminianism, or Socinianism, or the origin and efficacy of presbyterianism and episcopacy, but Tom and Will and Dick were well satisfied to leave such abstruse topics to the college-bred clerics, and to find their diversions at the alehouse when the day's labor was at an end. If they were conventionally reverent and sociably minded, they foregathered in the churchyard on Sunday and at the stroke of the bell took their places in the parish church to make the sign of the cross and join in the responses as far as memory served, but except for superstitious practices when they were afraid of a calamity religion meant little in the experience of every day.

The genesis of the Puritan protest can be traced to the Continent. Puritanism had its strength in the sturdy middle class of independent English farmers and prosperous townsmen. The landed aristocracy was religiously conservative, as it was politically. The working people of England were never much affected by Puritanism. It was especially the religion of the class of people who were making money by trade, and whose children were to become capitalists. Merchants in the eastern counties of England did business with the Continent, and through eastern and southern seaports an exchange of ideas took place as of merchandise. Religious refugees sailed for safety at Geneva or Amsterdam, when persecutions broke out at home. Others on occasion fled from the Continent for haven in England from the tyranny of Catholic Aus-

tria, Spain, or France. Exponents of the Protestant theology came across the Channel from Strassburg or Basle or Geneva, and remained to teach at Cambridge University.

The Puritans were sermon tasters and liked to hear foreign preachers. They were inveterate Bible readers, and they had their English version prepared by English refugees at Geneva. The canny merchant trading wool for the manufactured goods of the Low Countries never overlooked his economic gains, but his religious belief swayed his mind. Whatever his business traits, his attitude towards God was humble and sincere. Rejecting the sovereignty of Rome, he had substituted the Genevan doctrine of Calvin regarding the sovereignty of God. He believed all men sinners before God, bound in the grip of Satanic power, and if a man would escape the evil he must be continually on the alert to break loose from the hold of temptation and sin. The sins that troubled him were not the social sins of greed and injustice and harsh attitudes of man to man, but the frivolity and superficiality of life, and the unresisted inclination to self-indulgence. In his belief the divine will had elected a few to be saved from general condemnation in the day of judgment, and it was comfortable to feel that he was among the chosen, but he must be on his guard continually, must take life with all seriousness, and must strive to know the will of God. He was awed by his sense of personal responsibility to God. What the Catholic lightly relegated to the priest the Puritan felt weigh heavily upon his own soul. Helpless though he was to righten himself with God, he was, as he thought, under the sternest obligation to examine himself and by rigorous self-analysis to scourge his fallen nature. This belief in the difficulty of righteousness and the omnipresence of evil, even among the elect, gave to the Puritan a soberness of spirit that has seemed moroseness. It is a mistake to think that he was always solemn, that he never relaxed, even in the privacy of the family



circle, but life was serious, and he could never forget that goodness was rare and difficult. He inclined to exalt his own virtues in contrast to the vices that he saw around him. He exaggerated small failings, either in individuals or in the church. Nothing was petty that fell below the divine standard, as he understood it.

To believe unquestioningly in the divine rightness of one's own opinions, whether in religion or politics, is to invite bigotry to enthrone itself in one's nature. Convinced that the person or the institution that did not agree with him was wrong as well as mistaken, the Puritan spent his energy trying to effect the ecclesiastical changes that seemed urgent. He disliked especially the forms of worship in the Anglican Church. With its doctrines he had no quarrel. Though he found himself in opposition to the king or queen, he did not curb his own will. The divinity that hedged a king was as nothing to the divinity that spoke to his own conscience. Such opinions carried into politics were to justify to the mind of the Puritan the execution of King Charles I. As yet the Puritans confined their program to protests and petitions. After these proved ineffectual most of them with ill grace accepted their ecclesiastical defeat, and accommodated themselves to the Church from which they could not bear to separate. Some persisted in their opposition until they won temporary success under Cromwell. Others clung to the fiction that they were still good Anglicans and loyal Englishmen, but they were ready to consider the advisability of emigrating overseas in order to have their own way, when agitation seemed futile in England. To them, as to thousands of later European emigrants, America loomed as the hope of the future.

While the larger part of the most determined Puritans were coming slowly to this position, a few hundred persons took the extreme action of withdrawing from the Church of England and organizing their own independent congregations. They had not only become convinced that it



would be impossible to purify a church whose membership was as inclusive as the nation, but as they read the Bible that was to them authoritative they became satisfied that there was no more sanction for Anglicanism than for Catholicism. There was no hierarchy or ritual in the New Testament, no episcopal cathedral in Galilee. They believed that the true church of Christ was composed of the few who were genuinely Christian, and that it was their duty to separate from the large majority.

Soon several Separatist congregations emigrated to Holland. Two of these groups made history. One was the congregation in Middleburg. Its minister was Robert Browne, formerly an Anglican clergyman. He published a book that he called "Reformation without Tarying for Anie," and in it he set forth the fundamental principles that became basic in English and American Congregationalism. For him the church was "a company of redeemed believers, joined in covenant." It was a voluntary, like-minded group. It was independent of outside control, with the privilege of choosing its pastors and directing its affairs. Like the Church of England, it recognized the potential participation of the children of members, and baptized them, expecting them to enter into full membership when they came to years of understanding. The Congregational church had no place for episcopacy or an historical succession of the clergy. Logically it meant the separation of church and state, and the establishment of full religious autonomy. Browne did not remain true to his own principles, returning later to the Anglican fold from which he had come, but he had set forth so clearly the fundamental principles of a new and free organization of religion that they gained permanent root. Browne's followers were known for a time as Brownists, later as Congregationalists from the independence of the local congregation.

The second of the groups was the Pilgrim church at Leyden, of which John Robinson was the minister. Its

principles of organization were the same as those of the Brownists at Middleburg. Doctrinally the members were Calvinists. Services of worship differed from the Anglican church out of which its members had come. Prayers were not read; hymns were sung without organ accompaniment; the Scripture was read and paraphrased. The sermon was expository of biblical teaching and applied to personal conduct. To these Pilgrims fell the distinction of making the first settlement of independent churchmen in America.

It is not necessary to distinguish sharply between the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth and the Puritans who settled more numerous about Boston as members of the Massachusetts Bay colony. The Pilgrims who had come from Scrooby by way of Leyden were of a little lower social grade than the Puritans of Boston, but they had moved farther on the road to independency. The temper of the Pilgrims was milder than the temper of the Bay, though it may be that they had less provocation. Yet both were alike in their condemnation of the old ecclesiastical order, and they came to agree upon a new Congregational fellowship, even as they blended at length into a single colony.

On the edge of winter in the year 1620 the Mayflower landed at Plymouth its single shipload of men, women, and children, only a third of whom had come from Leyden. Some were friends from England, others were servants, still others were on fortune bent, and were out of sympathy with the religious purpose of the Pilgrims. Realizing this, the controlling element of the new colony in the absence of a charter of government had drawn up a compact which all were required to sign, that they would obey the established authority of the colony. Bravely they endured the long winter, though half of their number succumbed to its hardships. Spring brought reënforcements, and gradually they gained a foothold on the soil, but they were always few in number, apparently little more than a forlorn hope in the march upon the wilderness.

Tenacity of purpose is a well-recognized trait of the English character, but to that was added the strength of conviction that the Pilgrim enterprise had the approval of Heaven. Deprived of their religious leadership in the absence of Robinson who had delayed his emigration, the colonists relied on Brewster, their church elder, and on Bradford, their capable governor. Sunday after Sunday they climbed the hill to the log church, which was at once meeting-house, fort, and lookout, lived as good neighbors and Christians during the week, and acknowledged no ecclesiastical authority but their own suffrages. Thus was Congregationalism planted in the New World. From being a protest and a separation it had become a constructive affirmation and an enduring fellowship.

Viewed contemporaneously the landing of a few men and women on a wintry shore in America might seem inconsequential. Judged in the light of history it was an event of major significance. It marked the beginning of religious independency and an important contribution to political democracy in a land that has come to stand distinctively for those principles. It gave courage to the larger company of Puritans to venture the settlement of Massachusetts Bay and to adopt Separatist principles. From both of these sources issued a spiritual force that had much to do with fashioning the character of the American people. Plymouth was not the only colony that was founded in those days primarily because of religious convictions, but it was the first English-speaking colony of the sort to persevere to success, and the qualities that stand out in the Pilgrim character have been dominant qualities in the American church and state.

The story of the normal Puritans and their more radical variety of Pilgrims makes plain the important part that religion played in the settlement of New England. It was religious leaders who directed affairs in the infant colonies. Bradford wrote of the Pilgrims: "A great hope and inward zeal they had of laying some good foundation

for propagating and advancing the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ, in those remote parts of the world, though they should be but even as stepping-stones unto others for the performing of so great a work." Yet it was also the poverty and longing for homes in an English land that accentuated the religious impulse of those who had expatriated themselves.

Material interests were bound up with religious concerns in the larger Puritan migration to the settlements about Massachusetts Bay. The initial attempt was a fishing station near Cape Ann. A Puritan minister of the Anglican church at Dorchester, England, Reverend John White, was interested in establishing a permanent colony, and with others obtained a grant of land from the Plymouth Company of English merchants. Salem became the advance guard of an extensive Puritan migration, which within a few years dotted the shores of Massachusetts Bay with settlements that contained several thousand colonists. Their enterprise was chartered by the king as the Massachusetts Bay Company. Presently this Company transferred its business organization to America, and made it the constitutional basis of colony government. The first governor of the colony was John Winthrop.

Winthrop was a landowner who illustrates the changing economic and social conditions at a time when prosperity was passing from the landed class to the merchants. Landowners like Winthrop found themselves struggling to keep up the social standards of living of their peers. Small farmers and artisans, who were landless but sturdy workers, found their neighbors interested in emigration, and with them followed such leaders as Winthrop. In several instances whole parishes transferred congregation and pastor to a new location in America. Reverend John White, the promoter of the colony, who published his *Planters Plea* at the time of emigration, wrote concerning the major purpose of colonization "I should be very unwilling to hide anything I think might be fit, to discover

the uttermost of the intentions of our planters in their voyage to New England. . . . As it were absurd to conceive they have all one mind, so were it more ridiculous to imagine that they all have one scope. Necessity may press some; novelty draw on others; hopes of gain in time to come may prevail with a third sort; but that the most, and most sincere and godly part, have the advancement of the gospel for their main scope, I am confident."

The exact form that Puritanism was to take in the Bay Colony was not sensed at once. The church at Salem was organized at first to include all good citizens, like the Church of England. Higginson, its minister, exclaimed on leaving England: "We do not go to New England as Separatists from the Church of England, though we cannot but separate from the corruptions in it; but we go to practice the positive part of church reformation, and propagate the gospel in America." But almost immediately the leaders of the church felt that they had not drawn the lines of church membership closely enough. Sympathetic with the principles of Robert Browne, they reorganized the Salem church on a voluntary basis, accepting as members only those who could give evidence of regeneration and were willing to bind themselves by the obligations of a church covenant. The ministers of the church were chosen and reordained by the reorganized church. The Plymouth church, recognizing its kinship of faith and organization, extended the hand of Congregational fellowship. Thus the second Congregational church in America came into existence.

Restriction of church membership to a few who were the most spiritually qualified, and a tendency in the Puritan settlements to make membership a prerequisite to the privileges of citizenship, did not augur a cordial welcome to all comers.

To interpret the Puritan movement as intended to establish a free community church would be a mistake. It was soon apparent that Puritanism was a straight and



## 26 THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE U. S.

narrow way, and that those who could not conform must be content to be silent partners in the enterprise or withdraw from the colony. As early as 1631 a record of legislation reads: "To the end the body of commons may be preserved of honest and good men, it was ordered and agreed that for time to come no man shall be admitted to the freedom of this body politic, but such as are members of some of the churches within the limits of the same." Five years later the General Court voted not to permit any new churches without the express approval of the magistrates. The leaders were extremely sensitive to any criticism of their conduct. The colony expelled Roger Williams, though a minister, because he criticised their land tenure and because he declared the interference of magistrates with religion to be a wrong principle; and the next year banished Anne Hutchinson, though a woman of great popularity, because she had ventured to question the teaching of certain of the colonial ministers. Management of colonial affairs was in the hands of a small oligarchy so influenced by the ministers that the government has been called a theocracy. Those who could or would qualify for Congregational church membership constituted a small minority of the population, yet in 1638 all inhabitants were taxed for the support of the church as well as the commonwealth, and Sunday observance was regulated carefully.

With the growth of the colony more persons came who were not in strict sympathy with the policy of the Company, but the policy was not changed. Johnson in his *Wonder-working Providence* in 1624 warned all intruders as to the temper of the possessors of this New England Canaan: "All who intend to transport themselves hither, may know this is no place of licentious liberty, nor will this people suffer any to trample down this Vineyard of the Lord, but with diligent execution will cut off from the city of the Lord the wicked doers . . . for it is no wrong to any man, that a people who have spent their estates,

many of them, and ventured their lives for to keep faith and a pure conscience, to use by all means that the Word of God allows for maintenance and continuance of the same." Even the Indians were forbidden "to pawaw or perform outward worship to their false gods, or to the devil, in any part of our jurisdiction, whether they be such as dwell here, or shall come hither."

Quakers were extremists who went beyond even the Congregationalists in their religious independency. They rejected an ordained ministry, abandoned the sacraments, and gave an inner illumination of the spirit precedence over the letter of Scripture. In their enthusiasm for their peculiar ideas they tended to become fanatics. They acted unconventionally in the Puritan meeting-houses, and sometimes interrupted the service of worship. Against them the "Standing Order" in Massachusetts was especially severe, whipping and maiming and banishing them after the judicial methods of that time. In spite of great provocation the authorities resorted to the death penalty only after they had exhausted every other remedy to quell the disturbers of the peace. The Puritans were fearful that such disturbers would focus the attention of the English Government on their settlements, and that they would lose their large measure of political independence, so dear to them but so rigorous toward others. They were few in number. Most of their fellow Puritans had emigrated to the West Indies rather than to New England, and they felt the precariousness of their situation. Their fears were justified by King Charles the Second's message interfering with religious persecution, and by the revocation of the charter of the Company twenty years later. The better sense of the people triumphed, as it did later in the frenzy over witchcraft. The Quakers became a less disturbing element as the colony grew larger, and small incidents did not bulk so large, but their sufferings, however deserved, serve to show the intolerant disposition of a group of people who were more progressive than the rank

## 28 THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE U. S.

and file of Englishmen, but who could not, even in a new environment, get rid of traditional ways.

The unlovely side of Puritanism made its adherents disliked by their contemporaries. In England they were treated after the Stuart restoration as dangerous disturbers of the realm, and restrictive laws were passed against their religious practices. In the colonies which they controlled they were disliked for their narrowness and severity by those who did not agree with them. In the South, where they were in a minority, they were persecuted mildly from time to time.

It is the nobler side of the Puritan nature that has appealed to their American descendants and successors. To him who appreciates its real significance Plymouth Rock, on the sandy shore of Massachusetts is a greater shrine than the Caaba at Mecca in the sands of Arabia, for it marks the triumph of a principle that is basic for social construction. The religious devotion of the Arab worshiper may have been as great, and his superstitious reverence of the stone far greater than that of the descendant of the Pilgrim, but Plymouth Rock is a reminder that, in a time when most people built their political and religious faith on the shifting sands of a royal will, there were a few who rested their unchanging purpose on the sovereign will of God, and guided by him ventured to build their church and commonwealth. He who feels kinship with the Puritan spirit believes that from Plymouth Rock, as from the rock that Moses smote at Sinai, has flowed a stream of pure religion that has carried its beneficent waters through America's mountain passes and across her plains to the distant western sea.

The critical student modifies such eulogy, and inclines to become an iconoclast. The impartial student of history must try to put himself in the Puritan's place in England, fare with him in discomfort on a sea journey of many weeks, share his loneliness and homesickness, his hardships and diseases, even near-starvation. He must

not overlook his real kindness of heart, his fidelity to conscience, his willing sacrifice of personal comfort for what he conceived to be God's will for him. If in his public relations the Puritan was unyielding, even disagreeable; if he treated those who differed from him harshly, and provoked the scorn and hostility of others by his air of cocksureness and studied disapproval; it is necessary to remember that he was a child of stern reaction against a time-honored system, feeling his way towards a better age of nobler principles and convictions, and taught to believe that he must view every life and every institution in the light of eternity.

Certain it is that to plant a state and a church on the inhospitable frontier of the British nation was no easy task. A rude clearing paved the way for a settlement, and as each settlement grew it threw off offshoots into the neighborhood. So the Pilgrims worked up the coast of the Old Colony, and Puritans went inland from Boston to Dedham and Watertown. Every settlement clustered about the meeting-house as its center. The meeting-house was not only the rallying place of religion, but also the political gathering place for the town. Like the first houses it was of the rudest description, plain and unadorned and almost square, built of logs and thatched, with rude benches for the people and a simple desk for the pulpit. As the dwelling houses improved so did the meeting-houses, and by degrees they assumed the form that later became known as colonial architecture. There were "chief seats in the synagogue"; care was taken to preserve proper rank in society. Through the open windows came the sweet-scented breath of June days, and through cracks in the walls sifted the snows of winter, but the worshipers recked not of discomfort. In the coldest weather they sat in churches warmed only by foot-stoves and listened patiently to long sermons and prayers. Minister and teacher took each his turn in sermonizing and expounding Scripture Sunday morning and afternoon. A mid-week

lecture in the daytime was the precursor of the mid-week prayer meeting of a later day. The clergy were men of strong purpose, and many of trained ability. Narrow-minded they may have been, but they kept their flock in the narrow way of a single purpose. In home and church they talked and prayed, and instructed the children in the Puritan tenets. In council and assembly they formulated church polity and doctrine, and defended their outspoken opinions in print with convincing arguments. On the officers of the state they exerted so strong an influence that government was the expression of the will of a clerical aristocracy. To perpetuate a trained ministry Harvard College was founded at Cambridge before the colony of Massachusetts Bay was ten years old, the first of a line of Puritan institutions that was to extend across the continent.

The Puritan home was only less important than church and college to the perpetuation of the religious heritage. The family altar was as vital to family prosperity as the Lares and Penates of the Roman. Cradock's letter to Governor Endicott of Salem in 1629 gave direction in these words: "Our earnest desire is, that you take special care in settling those families, that the chief in the family (at least some of them) be grounded in religion, whereby morning and evening duties may be duly performed, and a watchful eye held over all in each family." The rigid observance of Sunday came to be regarded as a necessary part of the Puritan system, a protest against the laxity of English custom and an acceptance of the Jewish Sabbath as a model for Sunday. The Old Testament fitted well the Puritan need for a guide in the midst of enemies. Indians were devils in the flesh, and a world of invisible demons was no less real. And the Puritan feared God even more than the devil. Yet with his fear was a trust in God's wisdom and justice, a confidence in the immutability of his purpose, a faith in human destiny, and a joy and peace in believing that sweetened and softened the



stern and bitter aspect of early New England life. Even in such an experiment station as Massachusetts Puritanism was demonstrating the value of a religion that was based less on tradition than on profound personal convictions of individual religion.

### III. TENDENCIES TOWARDS LIBERALISM

By the year 1635 two regions of America had been planted with English colonies. In both of them religion was a social factor. To Virginia the official, conventional religion of the mother country had been transplanted; few settlers protested against it. In Massachusetts the adventure towards religious independency had begun, only to be checked by the old spirit of overhead authority. From these two centers, Virginia and Massachusetts, as well as from the mother country, the colonies of England expanded, and with colonial growth went on the expansion of religion.

Expansion is an historical characteristic of American religion. With the growth of the colonies churches multiplied. With the westward extension of the nation missionaries followed the frontier. By and by messengers of the Cross went to the other side of the world. Along with growth in numbers and expansion of interest came a richer content and a broader interpretation of religion. The causes of this expansion were various. Migration, evangelization, education, all contributed. Men of insight and enthusiasm pointed out the way. First of all religion had to be freed from the control of tradition, to be liberalized in its organization, its practices and its beliefs. It had to be freed from its dependence on the state. Then through experiments in organization it must find a working basis for efficient activity, through stern and vigorous thinking it must fashion for itself true and helpful expressions of its faith, and through vigorous persuasion it must enlist and set to work the multitudes which it touched in ever widening circles. In these various directions ten-

dencies towards liberalism became evident from the early days of colonization.

The first important event was the protest of Roger Williams against the functioning of the Massachusetts magistrates in the department of religion, and the subsequent settlement of Providence under his leadership. Important as was the Massachusetts experiment to be in the process of religious emancipation, the rise of insurgency and the establishment of Rhode Island as an asylum for the persecuted was even more significant. With all its value the Puritanism of the first generation in Massachusetts was only a half-way house from the Anglican Establishment to American independency in religion and democracy in church and state. It is to Williams and his unruly fellow citizens that the credit belongs for getting a permanent foothold for religious independency in America, a principle that was to extend its influence until in the next century the American nation established freedom in religion as a constitutional right.

At the head of Narragansett Bay outside the jurisdiction of Massachusetts Roger Williams and the sympathizers who followed him into the wilderness purchased land of the Indians and named their settlement Providence in recognition of the Divinity that was rough-hewing their destiny. Consistent with his contentions at Boston, Williams scrupulously purchased land from the Indians, and from the first kept civil and religious matters distinct. He and his associates did not handicap the colony with a fundamental law that should bind its infant limbs, but by general agreement they arranged that the heads of families should meet every two weeks, and by majority vote take whatever action might seem to be needed by the community. Three other settlements were soon made, one by Mrs. Hutchinson and her friends at the mouth of Narragansett Bay. Each managed its own affairs by democratic town government. Not until 1644 was a colonial government inaugurated by permission of the Parliamentary Commit-

tee on the Colonies in Great Britain, and even then a referendum was provided for, giving each town a right to decide whether or not to accept a law passed by the colonial legislature.

The same democratic freedom was practised in religion. There was nothing to prevent Williams and several of his followers, when they became convinced of the correctness of the Baptist contention that baptism as the door to church membership shall be restricted to those who have reached years of intelligence and experience, from mutually administering the ordinance of baptism by immersion and organizing the first Baptist church in America. There was nothing to hinder Williams after a few months from moving beyond his companions to the point where he felt dissatisfied with the manner of his last baptism. With perfect freedom of action he withdrew from church fellowship and called himself a Seeker. This did not prevent his continued residence in the colony, his active participation in its affairs, and his frequent usefulness as peacemaker among those who abused their freedom to quarrel, whether over politics or religion. In spite of his vagaries Roger Williams was through a long life a valued leader of the colony. Among American pioneers he stood almost alone in his time for those principles of freedom and democracy that are now so ingrained in American thought and life. Bancroft's estimate that Williams for his discovery of high moral principles should be classed with Newton and Kepler and Copernicus among the modern benefactors of mankind is not extravagant.

The new colony was not liked by its neighbors. Complete freedom in either religion or politics did not seem to most of the Puritans a sufficient principle for constructing a system of colonial organization. It was not positive, definite, reliable enough to be a corner stone. The history of the colonies about Narragansett Bay illustrated its ineffectiveness. Men of all creeds were admitted, and naturally some were oddly persuaded in their religious

convictions and tended to be unruly. Intoxicated with an individual freedom that was almost unique in civil society at that time, they became fanatical, turbulent, and even dangerous to the existence of the settlement. But the leaders in the colony believed that freedom is a necessary preliminary to the growth of vital religion, and maintained their policy unflinchingly. The people of the Providence colony were clearing the way for achievement in religious progress. Henceforth, except later on for Catholics, there was to be at least one spot where men and women should be free to think, to worship, to organize and to disagree, as they believed themselves taught by Scripture or the inner light. After their rude pioneering it became easier for the people of America to foster true liberty, build denominational organizations on the basis of voluntary rather than compulsory association, and help fashion the democracy that became so conspicuous a characteristic of the American nation.

Massachusetts and Connecticut did not invite the Narragansett Bay settlements to join them in defense against the Indians, though it was Roger Williams who more than once gave friendly warning of approaching danger to those colonies. They would have liked to absorb the lawless towns on their borders, and might have done so had not a charter been secured for the associated towns by John Clarke, minister at Newport. This charter affirmed the principle of religious liberty in the quaint language that, as it was in the hearts of the King's faithful subjects "to hold forth a lively experiment" of "full liberty in religious concernments," it was his royal pleasure that "no person within the said colony at any time hereafter shall be molested, punished, disquieted or called in question for any differences of opinion in matters of religion," provided they did not use their liberty as a cloak to license and lawlessness. For one hundred and eighty years this charter served as the constitution of the colony.

Rhode Island is the first colony where the Baptists ap-



pear in any appreciable numbers. Now and then the Massachusetts records reveal the presence of those who were unwilling to have their infant children baptized, only to be punished for their obstinacy. Even the first head of Harvard College, Henry Dunster, fell into what Mather called the errors of Antipædobaptism. But the civil government of Massachusetts was so uncivil to such sectaries that most of them went elsewhere. Rhode Island offered convenient sanctuary. John Clarke, who obtained the charter, was the organizer and pastor of the Baptist church in Newport, one of the early towns of the Rhode Island colony. His services to the colony place him second only to Williams among its pioneers, and his services to the Baptists have given him prominence in their annals.

The English-speaking Baptists were a variety of the Independents who believed with the founder of Brownism in the freedom of the churches to manage their own affairs. They were joined with the Congregational groups in church membership until in their interpretation of the New Testament they decided that it was not proper to baptize small children, who could have no conscious experience of personal religion. By thus stressing individual experience and action they lost the religious solidarity of the family, but they conserved the sense of personal responsibility. English-speaking Baptists were congregational in polity with few exceptions, and most of them were Calvinistic in doctrine.

Another variant from Massachusetts Puritanism was Thomas Hooker. He was pastor of a group of emigrants who landed in Massachusetts and settled near Boston at first, but, dissatisfied with the quarrelsome spirit that just then was vexing the colony and desiring room to expand, soon trekked across country to the valley of the Connecticut River. There they established several villages which became the colony of Connecticut. They were Puritans, but more liberal than their Massachusetts breth-

ren. Hooker, as minister at Hartford and mentor of the colony, reminded the people when they were planning their government that the foundation of authority lies in the free consent of the people, a principle kept in subordination by the Massachusetts authorities. The government was duly constituted in 1639 with an instrument of government which James Bryce has declared "the first written constitution known to history, creating a government." The constitution established the authority of the state in matters of religion and assessed the entire community for the support of the Congregational church, but freemen were given suffrage without religious qualification, and a really democratic spirit forestalled troublesome problems of toleration. It was worth much to the colony that Hooker was a man of broad opinions and good temper, for the New England ministers were revered everywhere as expert counsellors in civil as well as ecclesiastical matters, and in Massachusetts their conservatism proved the chief hindrance to social and spiritual progress. On the foundation laid in 1639 the Connecticut settlements prospered without the tempestuous experiences of the less balanced men and women who were attracted to Rhode Island, but they fell short of the distinction that came to the smaller colony as an oasis for heretics of every sort in the desert of contemporary intolerance.

On Long Island Sound the colony of New Haven was founded in 1638 as a Bible Commonwealth on a basis more rigid even than that of Massachusetts. Its founders had touched at Boston on the way out from England in the midst of the Hutchinsonian controversy, and preferred to go on farther to make their own settlement. Disagreements troubled them, and in 1662 the colony was merged with Connecticut under an English charter that proved as permanently satisfactory as the liberal charter of Rhode Island that was granted the next year to the settlers on Narragansett Bay.

In the middle part of the Atlantic seaboard strip, be-

tween the royal Episcopal colonies of the South and the Puritans of New England, a third group of colonies found room. Grants of territory were made to proprietors, who were friends or creditors of Charles I or his sons Charles and James, and they threw open their lands on liberal terms to settlers of various religious persuasions. The first of these colonies to be delimited was Maryland. Its proprietor, Lord Baltimore, was a Catholic, liberal enough to appreciate the importance of a broad religious policy for the development of his property. Though his first colonizing expedition included two Jesuit missionaries, most of the company of emigrants were Protestants, and the policy of toleration of all religious convictions was adopted. The Catholic clergy zealously propagated their faith until they boasted that they had converted most of the Protestants and had made a good beginning among the Indians, but the colony was not destined to remain Catholic. It was not long before an influx of Puritans who were expelled from Virginia came across the Potomac. Presently they obtained control of the Maryland government, put the Catholics in subordination, and entered upon an inexcusable course of political intolerance. After a time the colony came under the control ecclesiastically of the Church of England, and lost what spiritual vigor it had through the scandalous conduct of a clergy without energy or character.

Before Maryland was assigned to Lord Baltimore the Dutch had settled at New Amsterdam. With the transfer of the colony to England the Duke of York became its proprietor. Naturally the Church of England was established, and all citizens were required to pay taxes for its support. The religious policy of general tolerance made possible the settlement of various Protestant sects, but after the fall of James II, a Catholic king, Catholics were treated as undesirable citizens in New York.

Northern New Jersey has always been connected closely with New York. For a time it was part of the Dutch

territory, but it was near enough to New England to feel the Puritan influence, and after the transfer of Dutch America to England in 1664 scattered Puritan settlements were made from New England. New Jersey became a proprietary colony under Quaker dominance, and enjoyed religious toleration that forecast Penn's policy in Pennsylvania. Hundreds of Quakers found admittance, and organized their system of meetings. As in Maryland and New York, a period of proprietorship was followed by a change of political status to a royal colony, and the Church of England naturally enjoyed special privilege until the Revolution. All kinds of Christians were tolerated except Roman Catholics.

Among the proprietary colonies none maintained so consistently liberal an attitude towards settlers as the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania. The early Friends, or Quakers, had moved far along the path of unconventionality in religion and had come to grief as a consequence, but their founder, George Fox, was a spiritually minded man, whose influence could be trusted to rub off the sharp corners of a militant Quakerism. William Penn, the King's creditor, was another wise and capable leader. By the time he had settled his father's accounts with royalty and had secured his patent from the King for a large area in America, the Friends were steadyding down, and Pennsylvania was to become a model colony.

Zeal and determination, when refined by persecution and turned into useful channels of activity by wise administration, proved an asset to the new colony. Penn was unselfish enough to surrender his personal rights of control and progressive enough to plan a democratic government for the territory over which he was proprietor. His fellow Quakers were prompt to avail themselves of the opportunity that he offered them in America, and with commendable generosity he advertised a welcome to oppressed sects on the Continent, promising a free government and liberty to think and worship in their own way,

besides plenty of land on easy terms. It is not strange that such a combination of good fortune should have attracted thousands of dissenters in Europe. Among the first was a company of Mennonites, a quiet, inoffensive Dutch folk. They resembled the Quakers in their detestation of war and in some of their habits, and were well suited to help establish the colony. There were Quakers, too, from the Continent, German Dunkards with their queer practices of footwashing and trine immersion, and Pietists who deplored the decline of spirituality in the established church of the Fatherland. Most numerous of all were the Palatines who fled from the ravaging armies of the French king, Louis XIV, carrying fire and sword through the Rhine valley. Most of these refugees acquired the nickname of Pennsylvania Dutch. Living segregated in their own communities, they maintained rigidly their religious convictions and preserved their peculiar customs. They farmed their acres thriftily and traded among themselves, until they gained a reputation second to no region in the country for excellence of character and for material prosperity.

These groups of refugees tended to become self-centered, and to perpetuate their folkways from generation to generation. Quite different were the Moravians who settled later about Bethlehem. In the spirit of the early Christian disciples they looked out upon the world as a mission field, even before they had well established themselves in Europe, and with more consecration than training went willingly to the hardest, most discouraging parts of pagan lands. Such a people, though they did not arrive in America much before the middle of the eighteenth century, gave a religious tone to their part of the province at a time when the Quakers had grown increasingly worldly as they waxed prosperous.

Between the arrival of the minor groups and the later Moravians occurred an extensive migration of Lutherans and members of the Reformed churches of western Ger-



many, not to mention a sprinkling of Catholics. Time would fail to tell of the Irish and Welsh Quakers and Baptists, the Schwenkfelders, and the Seventh Day German Baptists. There was room for them all. Pennsylvania was ample in area, possessing a fertile soil and a climate not too rigorous, and the colony grew rapidly in population and wealth.

When William Penn outlined his plan of government he provided for religious freedom, and when the colony was organized the people through their representatives were given large powers of self-government. The Great Law of 1682 was strict in its rulings against profanity, crime, adultery and bigamy. It required all government officials to be professing Christians, and all citizens to be believers in God, but otherwise it permitted liberty in religion. "It is enacted," ran the law, "that no person now or at any time hereafter living in this province, who shall confess and acknowledge Almighty God to be the Creator, upholder and ruler of the world, and that professteth him or herself obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly under the civil government, shall in any wise be molested or prejudiced for his or her conscientious persuasion or practice, nor shall he or she at any time be compelled to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place, or ministry, whatever, contrary to his or her mind, but shall freely and fully enjoy his or her Christian liberty in that respect." Under this law Pennsylvania was a city of refuge for many who were sorely oppressed.

By the time William Penn was getting his colony started and the Duke of York was making his Dutch subjects docile, the germ of liberalism was developing in Massachusetts. The first evidence of it was the adoption of the Half-way Covenant.

From the early reorganization at Salem the churches of the Bay Colony had limited full membership to those who could show proper spiritual qualifications. This resulted in far smaller numbers in the churches than the

number of inhabitants in the colony. Since church membership was prerequisite to voting, dissatisfaction was felt among certain of the settlers, but that feeling did not disturb the church leaders. That which troubled them was a lack of religious interest in the young people who had been baptized in infancy and were expected to take the places of their parents in the privileges and obligations of church membership. By 1660 there was danger that the churches might perish, unless spiritual regeneration should be waived as a qualification necessary for membership. Then, too, many of the colonists were moving out to the advancing frontiers of settlement, depleting the forces of the local churches. Land was reserved for religious purposes, and new churches were built in the growing sections as fast as convenient, but their membership was small. Under these circumstances a church synod, meeting in 1662, set wider ajar the door to church membership. Those who had been baptized in infancy, if they "owned the covenant" made for them by their parents, even though they had no such definite experience of repentance and faith as had been required of their parents, were permitted to present their children for baptism, and so a sort of ecclesiastical succession was provided for, but the membership of the Covenant did not carry with it participation in the communion or in the suffrage. The Half-way Covenant in thus making it easier to qualify for church membership helped to fill up the churches, but it resulted, as its opponents foresaw, in lowering the rigorous standards of Puritanism and in hastening the decline of religious interest that had begun already and was lamented by the Puritan clergy. The Half-way Covenant was abandoned generally about the middle of the eighteenth century.

The acceptance of the Half-way Covenant marks not only a weakening of the theocracy but also a decline of religious interest in the New England churches. The leaders of the first generation were passing away. Hooker

had ceased his earthly labors in 1647; two years later Winthrop ended his useful life; in 1652 died John Cotton, "more lamented, probably, than any other of the fathers of New England, as his influence had doubtless contributed more than that of any other to settle the details of New England institutions." The earnest men and women who had toiled with them in the occupation of the New England Canaan, and who had listened appreciatively to their pulpit ministrations and followed their political leadership were most of them beneath the sod by 1662. Those who followed them felt the deteriorating influence which accompanies life in a new settlement. Lack of the comforts of life, of adequate educational opportunities, of the refinement of an older civilization, produced a ruder type of men in both pulpit and pew. An ambition for extensive landed possessions led to scattered settlements, to a weakening of the old bonds, and to a prolonged influence of frontier life. Political questions absorbed attention, economic disturbances troubled them, and war with its horrors and its demoralization left its mark upon the settlements. Not least important of all was the tendency, illustrated by the Half-way Covenant, to make certain forms take the place of genuine religious experience and worship, to be content, as had the churches of Europe, with a nominal adherence to the church, a tendency which the first colonists would have opposed ardently. All these influences produced a religious decline. Disregard of the claims of the church, Sabbath-breaking, intemperance, licentiousness, and a lack of the homely virtues, became gradually conspicuous. They were lamented frequently by writers of the last quarter century before 1700. "That there is a great decay of the power of religion throughout all New England," wrote Increase Mather, "is lamentably true. . . . If the begun apostasy should proceed as fast the next thirty years, as it has done these last, surely it will come to that in New England except the gospel itself depart with the

order of it that the most conscientious people therein will think themselves concerned to gather churches out of churches." Some years earlier Torrey of Weymouth, in an election sermon at Boston, said: "There is already a great death upon religion, little more left than a name to live. . . . As converting work doth cease, so religion doth die away." Increase Mather said to Harvard students in 1696: "It is the judgment of very learned men, that, in the glorious times promised to the church on earth, *America* will be *Hell*. And although there is a number of the elect of *God* to be born here, I am very afraid, that, in process of time, *New England* will be the wofullest place in all *America*; as some other parts of the world, once famous for religion, are now the dolefullest on earth, perfect pictures and emblems of *Hell*, when you see this little academy fallen to the ground,—then know it is a terrible thing, which *God* is about to bring upon this land." Such doleful statements continued to be heard for fifty years in all parts of New England.

In 1679, when this tendency became plain, the General Court at the suggestion of eighteen prominent ministers called the Reforming Synod to attempt to find a remedy. This body recognized the unfortunate conditions, enumerated thirteen prevalent evils, and prescribed therefor twelve remedies to strengthen the ecclesiastical foundations. A part of the work of the Synod was the preparation of a revised confession of faith, which in the form of the Savoy Confession of England was adopted at a second session of the Reforming Synod in 1680. But the medicine prescribed produced only temporary effect.

Contemporaneous with this period and a vigorous defender of Puritan standards was Reverend Increase Mather. Through a long life in church, college, and state he tried to stem the tide of religious indifference, much of the time seconded by his equally eminent son, Cotton Mather. It is not inappropriate to call the period the

**Age of the Mathers.** In his early days Mather was intolerant of other sects. "I believe," he said, "that antichrist hath not at this day a more probable way to advance his kingdom of darkness than by a toleration of all religions and persuasions." But as he ripened with the years his mind broadened, until in 1718 with his son Cotton he joined in the ordination of a Baptist minister in the town of Boston.

The most serious incident of the period was the loss of the first charter of the Bay colony. The numerous complaints of oppression that had gone to England induced the English king, Charles II, to abrogate the charter in 1684, and with it threatened to fall the laboriously reared system of Puritan institutions. In the end there was little change, though it required religious toleration in the state and freedom of the franchise regardless of church membership. For sixty years church and state had been almost synonymous. During most of that time the powers of government had been invoked to maintain the undisturbed reign of orthodoxy. But other denominations had been making headway for some time. Baptists and Friends had both secured a foothold in Boston, and with the abrogation of the old charter came Episcopacy to vex the people of the Old South church until King's Chapel was ready for its use. Equality was not yet, but the last decade of the century marks the end of an era.

It was a changing theology that produced another stage in the growth of liberalism. In the eighteenth century the New England churches became interested in discussions about Calvinism. Hitherto their main concern had been with questions of church membership, discipline and forms of organization. Though they had organized on a Congregational basis, they were semi-presbyterian in the local churches in Massachusetts, and in Connecticut were consociations of churches. They thought better of it after a time, but polity entered into their debates and their experiments. With doctrine they were only slightly con-



cerned after the Cambridge Synod had adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1648.

The last years of the seventeenth century saw the organization of a church in Boston on a more liberal doctrinal basis. No relation of Christian experience was necessary for admission to membership, and the minister of the new church had been ordained in England, lest the Massachusetts ministers should judge him too liberal to receive their approval in an ordination council. Already in England there was a distinct drift away from the thinking and the discipline of Geneva, and in its place a cold, formal type of religion known as Arminianism was coming into vogue. The changed atmosphere was felt in the circles of ministerial education. Harvard College was so progressive in ideas as to make Increase Mather unacceptable as its president, and his son, Cotton, felt Satan terribly shaking the churches of Massachusetts. To combat this tendency and to arrest the decline of religious interest it was necessary to warm the hearts of the people religiously and to champion the Calvinistic faith. The apostle who assumed that task was Jonathan Edwards.

Of devout ancestry, born in 1703 and trained at Yale College, and influenced by a religious experience that was to him very definite, Edwards became while still a young man the minister of the church at Northampton in the Connecticut river valley, the most influential clerical position in Massachusetts outside the Boston district. He succeeded his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, who had favored admitting all exemplary persons to the Lord's Supper as a means of divine grace, and had so faithfully warned them to make their peace with God that an unusual interest in religion permeated the town. From this vantage point the youthful minister began preaching heart-searching sermons that were so superheated with the fires of eternal punishment that in terror for their souls the people of the village yielded to his warnings and sought admission to membership in the church. The events in

Northampton were not isolated occurrences. In many localities a similar revival of interest in personal religion was producing a new religious atmosphere.

It was natural that the new interest in religion should lead to a new interest in theology, for theology is an attempt to interpret religious experience. Were the Calvinistic ideas of the fathers correctly thought out and substantiated by God's Word, or did the newer Arminian doctrines that were flourishing in England come nearer the truth? Was sovereignty absolute, or was it conditioned by the attitude of the human creature? Was Christ "very God of very God," or was the Arian tenet of the inferiority of the Son rather to be accepted? Arianism had been making its way in England as a natural result of unspiritual Arminianism, but was as yet scarcely perceptible in America.

Edwards became the chief of interpreters, as he was the prince of revivalists. By philosophical as well as theological writings he refuted the propositions of the Arminian writers in England, whose publications were being read in America. Discussing the freedom of the human will, he softened the severity of the Calvinistic doctrine of election by explaining that man had a natural though not a moral ability to repent of his sins, and he was therefore responsible to act upon that natural ability. To use means of grace without repentance in order to get into right relations with God was sinful. Edwards's championship of a slightly modified Calvinism gave him a solid reputation with the Congregationalists of New England, but his teaching about the misuse of the means of grace made him unpopular in the church that had been educated in the ideas of Stoddardeanism, and led to his resignation as pastor.

The erstwhile minister of Northampton presently became a frontier guardian of religion and missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts. There he had leisure to think and to

write. The result was an extended discussion of original sin and of the nature of virtue. In these writings Edwards gained for himself in England as well as in America a high reputation as a philosopher, and he vindicated a form of Calvinism that proved so acceptable to the Congregational churches that it became known as the New England theology, supplanting the "Old Calvinism" with a "New Divinity."

Jonathan Edwards holds an unrivaled place among the Puritan divines of New England. Combining the severe piety of the first generation of the fathers with the mystical fervor of an eighteenth century prophet, he performed for the churches the service of clarifying their theology and spiritualizing their religion. He preached what was in his heart as well as in his brain. In his own experience a sovereign God had gripped his soul and attached it to himself by bonds that could not be broken. He agonized to bring men to an understanding of a similar experience. By his evangelistic emphasis he made a permanent impression upon his contemporaries. By means of his remarkable powers of argumentation he succeeded in reëstablishing the Calvinistic faith, which had been sorely wounded by the prevalent Arminianism. Dying in the prime of life, as he was about to assume the presidency of Princeton College, he left behind him an inheritance of thought and feeling that profoundly affected the succeeding period of New England history.

Edwards partially humanized Calvinism at the same time that he vindicated it, and he was followed by a galaxy of lesser theological lights, who contributed their addenda to his thought through several generations. But none of them can be said to have liberalized Puritan orthodoxy. It remained for certain Massachusetts preachers to show a decided tendency towards theological liberalism. Charles Chauncy opposed the revivalism that Edwards had initiated, and controverted his orthodox writings with numerous sermons and essays. In opposi-

tion to the prevailing belief that man depended on God for his salvation Chauncy urged the necessary and rational course of striving to obtain salvation. Believing in the authority and infallibility of the Bible, holding to the current governmental theory of the atonement, he was in most respects a normal Congregationalist, but he anticipated a universal restoration of all men after prolonged suffering in hell, and he was typical of not a few who were drifting to new moorings without a very definite idea of whither they were bound.

Still more independent was Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of the West church in Boston. With lips and pen he treated lightly certain of the fundamental doctrines, shocking the conservative people of the churches. Bellamy, one of the doctrinal heirs of Edwards, denouncing liberal tendencies cried: "Come along to Boston, and see there a celebrated doctor of divinity, at the head of a large party! He boldly ridicules the doctrine of the Trinity, and denies the doctrine of justification by faith alone, in the sight of all the country, in his book of sermons."

Unitarianism was in the making. Liberal thought was surging in the veins of restless thinkers in religion, as it was in politics in those years before the Revolution. The tendency of the times was in his favor. The Revolutionary struggle absorbed attention for a few years; then religious liberty was to take the field and maintain the same principles in the realm of the spirit as of the State.

Another phase of the tendency towards liberalism appears in the struggle for ecclesiastical equality. It was an Old World tradition, accepted unquestioningly by most of the American church people, that church and state should be in close relation. The church was the mentor of the state, and the state the protector of the church. Legislatures interested themselves in ecclesiastical affairs, and passed laws for the support of the churches. All citizens were taxed for the building and maintenance of meeting-houses in the local parishes, and for the support

of a minister, whether in Puritan New England or Episcopal Virginia. It was a long time before any exception was made for those who belonged to dissenting churches, and non-church members could not expect to escape church taxes. There was grave dissatisfaction. There was concerted agitation among the Baptists in Massachusetts just as the Revolutionary conflict was breaking out. In a memorial to the provincial assembly and to the Continental Congress they argued the same principle of independence that the colonies were demanding from Great Britain. Why should they be taxed for the support of another church any more than the American colonies should be taxed for the benefit of the mother country? The churches in association appointed an agent to collect grievances, and if necessary to carry their complaint to the highest authorities, but the policy of the colony was not altered.

The constitution that was adopted in 1780 by the independent State of Massachusetts preserved the Congregational church establishment, but dissenting congregations were permitted to divert to their use the contributions of their members that were paid to the parish for church support. Still there were legal technicalities that vexed dissenters for thirty years longer. The Puritan Establishment did not give up its union with the State until 1833.

In Virginia an intolerant policy towards dissenters of all sorts was long maintained. Although the Episcopal ministers were unpopular, the persons were few whose convictions led them to separate from the churches of the established faith, but Baptists, Presbyterians and Quakers increased in numbers. As in Massachusetts, the approach of the Revolution led to a memorializing of the legislature of the colony in behalf of the separation of church and State, the petitioners expressing the hope that "in this enlightened age, and in a land where all of every denomination are united in the most strenuous efforts to be free,"



the legislature would agree to remove "every species of religious as well as civil bondage." Taking the position of Roger Williams, they affirmed that governments should be restricted to civil functions, that religion was a personal affair and one's duty to his God could only "be directed by reason and conviction." Remonstrances came from the other side, pointing out the value and prestige of the Establishment, and the colonial assembly spent a long time discussing the matter. The immediate result was the exemption of dissenters from ecclesiastical taxes, and the repeal of all laws enforcing attendance at the parish churches. Religious freedom became complete in 1785, when Thomas Jefferson championed the cause of religious equality, declaring that any restriction upon perfect religious liberty was infringement upon a natural right. Other colonies North and South followed this example of disestablishment, abolished religious qualifications for the suffrage, and removed from their statute books laws against such obnoxious persons as Catholics, which for a time had blotted the fame even of Rhode Island's broad tolerance. Most important of all was the adoption of the first clause of the Bill of Rights appended to the Constitution of the new nation forbidding the establishment of any national church. This broad policy did not mean that the nation ceased to be Christian, but it established as a fundamental principle the sacred right of freedom to think, to speak, and to worship according to the impulse of the inner spirit.

#### IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF FREEDOM

THE winning of religious freedom established the principle of voluntarism in American ecclesiastical circles. By the Old World system both the Catholic and Protestant churches of Europe had their assured income from lands and taxes. Gifts were expected, but they were only incidental to the larger permanent incomes. In America the whole future of religion was intrusted to the personal interest of men and women whose first concern would naturally be the support of their own families, and whose absorption in winning a competency from the new continent might make it seem doubtful if they would give generously for so intangible a thing as religion.

Voluntarism proved a stimulus to church activity. It is a healthy principle that a church must exert itself in order to live, and endowments and establishments frequently cut the nerve of generosity. Voluntarism was a principle in harmony with the sturdy, self-reliant character of colonists inured to hardship and depending on their own resources. It was in accord with the genius of America, and no other principle could have endured in American churches.

To Europeans accustomed to look to Government for every needed church equipment, it seemed remarkable that church members, and even those outside of the churches, should so generously contribute to the building of meeting-houses, should pay willingly the salaries of the ministers, should found and endow academies and colleges, should raise sums of money to send missionaries to the frontiers of their own land and to lands on the other side of the world which they had never seen, and should

coöperate heartily both with money and effort in various kinds of philanthropy. What seemed so strange became a matter of course to Americans, and in spite of the rapid growth of population and the expansion of the country westward the churches kept pace with the need.

Voluntarism is not merely a matter of church support. It was almost as novel a principle in regard to membership in the churches. With an established church, as in England, it was the natural expectation that membership would be coextensive with citizenship. From the beginning it was not so in the most virile American colonies, and it became an established principle among American Protestants that religion was a personal matter, and that the responsibilities of church membership should be assumed only after a voluntary act of initiation into such membership. Where baptism had been administered in infancy the child grown to adolescence took upon himself the obligations assumed by others, owning the covenant that had been made for him or accepting confirmation at the hands of a bishop, and thus publicly acknowledged his purpose and his church relation. Persons not thus baptized decided for themselves when, if at all, they would apply for baptism and church membership.

The working out of the voluntary principle has demonstrated its sufficiency. A heartfelt loyalty to the church of one's choice, a willingness to serve in the ecclesiastical ranks that has made great lay movements possible, a generosity unparalleled in church history, are among the results that the principle has wrought. Churches are tempted sometimes to resort to strong measures to obtain greatly needed funds, but it is not necessary to demand tithes or to lay assessments. The missionary enterprise of evangelical Christians in this country is a stupendous undertaking, when it is realized that the societies that direct it are voluntary, that its directing boards are unpaid, and that its resources are the generous hearts of its constituents. Greater sums are devoted to the support of

local churches, but they too are the voluntary gifts of the members, yet for generations ministers have labored, Sunday school teachers have instructed, and workers have toiled for little or nothing because of their love of the church or of their particular enterprise.

Voluntarism is so obvious a principle, as it is exhibited in American churches, that its significance is overlooked, but it is one of the revolutionary principles adopted by modern ecclesiastical organizations. It does not work easily among people brought up to the state church system, as in the case of foreign-speaking churches gathered among converts to Protestantism who have migrated hither. It requires training in stewardship even among those who have been reared to accept it in principle. But it is the only principle that agrees with a republican government, with an intelligent citizenry, and with religious liberty in faith and organization. For these reasons it seems certain to endure.

A second consequence of emancipation was democracy in the churches. Democracy has become so familiar in church as in state that it is not easy to realize how revolutionary it was as compared with the European practice to give the management of ecclesiastical affairs to the people. Throughout the Middle Ages the people had nothing to say about the conduct of church matters. That belonged to a separate class of ordained clergy. In the Protestant countries of Europe the hold of the clergy remained strong. Aristocratic control by bishop or presbyter was the order in the state churches of Holland, Scandinavia, England, or Scotland. Congregationalism had hardly been conceived when the seventeenth century opened. In Massachusetts the Congregational ministers presumed to dominate the local congregation, and even to direct the action of the colonial legislature, when possible, and in Connecticut they went so far as to organize a semi-presbyterian consociation of churches, but the trend of the times was in favor of the laity sharing in ecclesi-

astical legislation and administration. In the colonial South the clergy were dépendent upon their vestrymen, so that local control of ecclesiastical affairs was in the hands of laymen. In the North in Congregational and Baptist churches one man had as good a right to speak and vote and hold office as another, and ministers gradually lost their masterfulness. In both denominations the right of the local churches was guarded jealously, and the organization of district and national assemblies was long delayed. Later on new groups, like the Campbellites, organized themselves on a voluntary basis and refused to accept the authority of any person or clerical body that was not responsible to the people. In such bodies as the Episcopal Convention or the Methodist Conference, organized as soon as circumstances warranted, there was larger measure of superintendence, but even there the people were the court of last resort, and the principle of democracy grew in favor. As time went on the members of the churches demanded full lay representation in the ecclesiastical assemblies, and obtained the privilege of speaking and voting and holding office.

Democracy is practised with as keen a relish in church circles as in the old New England town meetings, so expert a school in the training of a democratic people. It is in America that laymen in the churches have developed their movements, even among the Catholics, and in the most democratic groups women have enjoyed equal rights with men in most instances, and even have found their way into pulpits as well as on governing boards. The result has been that every variety of Protestant religious organization that has counted for much in this country, no matter what its polity or ecclesiastical tradition, is organized democratically. Authority may be delegated for various purposes, but the ultimate control rests with the individual members of the churches.

Democracy, like voluntarism, is in harmony with the government and social life of the people in America, but



it does not agree with the ecclesiastical traditions that have come down from the European past, and since the church is a conservative institution it would not have been strange if there had been more of aristocratic government in the American churches. But as the pure democracy of the town meeting and the representative democracy of the colonial assembly fostered political liberty, and in turn were made permanently possible by the full realization of political liberty, so the pure and representative democracies of the Protestant churches stimulated religious liberty and were a permanent consequence of that liberty.

A third consequence of religious liberty was denominationalism. Though not undeveloped elsewhere, and tending to perpetuate the distinctive features of its European origins, it is as characteristic an American product as voluntarism. Condemned as denominationalism has been for its two hundred varieties of churches, for its rivalries and jealousies, its proselyting and overchuraching, its spirit of bigotry and its perpetuation of outgrown issues, denominationalism must be recognized as the inevitable outcome of the principle that every person has a right to choose his religious affiliations, and that like seeks like according to the law of social psychology. Denominationalism was impossible when uniformity was enforced, as it was generally until the days of American settlement. It grew rapidly in the fertile soil of religious independence. Individualism has always been conspicuous as an American trait. It strengthened with the process of the disintegration of old institutions consequent upon emancipation from the old tyrannies. It has produced denominational variety, and has split up denominations into smaller units, with independent organization, though with a family likeness. But there is a point beyond which the disintegration of religious organization does not go. Seekers, because they could not find any body of Christians that suited their ideas, might separate from all de-

nominations, but the normal person prefers companionship in religion, and those who have similar convictions and purposes have united in religious as in political and social groups. In the absence of political restraint a single local church learned to know others of its sort, and to value mutual counsel and coöperation. Loosely organized bodies were slow to yield to the centripetal forces, but the values that denominationalism exhibited in the experiences of years made it the inevitable consequence. It was the fellowship and counsel of the other churches that made single bodies unite in association or conference. Under the impulse of the missionary passion they organized their voluntary societies, first for domestic and then for foreign missions, and thus learned the value of coöperation for a common purpose.

A denomination like the Episcopalian had an inherited tradition and a closely knit organization that gave it a relatively keen appreciation of the denomination; the denominational consciousness was relatively easy of attainment by the Presbyterians; but others came to denominational consciousness only when a common enterprise like foreign missions awoke them to their likemindedness. Denominationalism in America has resembled nationalism. Reluctance to accept overhead authority made the community and state hold on to their independence as long as possible, but the larger interests of the people as a whole made closer association and organization necessary. As in the nation so in the denomination a spirit of loyalty developed that strengthened the bonds of the churches of a given name, while it weakened interdenominational coöperation.

The denominational emphasis was costly. It established too many churches in a limited territory and made no provision at all for the needs of the people in certain neighborhoods. It produced envy, jealousy, unhealthy rivalry. It reacted unfavorably upon public opinion outside the churches. But it was the product of the spirit

of the times, with its emphasis upon independence and group rights. It was particularly strong on the frontier, where its effects were unfortunate. Instead of a multitude of weak Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian enterprises, there might have been one or two strong, evangelical churches, located strategically in each community, but it required long experience to make that plain.

These three consequences of religious liberty—voluntarism, democracy, and denominationalism—are significant characteristics of American Christianity. They are not exclusively American products, but they have had fullest opportunity for experimentation and fullest vindication here, where religion is most free and has unlimited scope. They are not likely to cease to function, for they are in harmony with the American spirit. That they will be supplemented on occasion, as, for example, by interdenominational conferences, there is every reason to expect. That they require a high degree of education in the rank and file and skilled leadership, if the churches are to be efficient, is unquestionable. But, whether for good or ill, they are the outstanding elements in the American ecclesiastical system.

One other consequence of religious freedom and equality was evangelism. Since an individual did not enter automatically into church membership under a voluntary system, it was necessary to persuade him to qualify for admittance. The pulpit therefore appealed to those who had not made profession of religion, and at certain seasons made special effort for a religious revival. In the Protestant, especially the Puritan, churches of that time the pulpit was the preacher's throne. In gown and bands the Puritan preacher stood in his lofty eyrie perched above the heads of the people, and with grave dignity spoke with an authority that was seldom disputed. In revival services the preacher came nearer to the level of his audience, sometimes spoke in the open air after the fashion of Wesley and Whitefield, the Eng-

lish revivalists, and drove home his message with pungency.

Frontier evangelism became necessary with the advance of settlement. From the early years of colonization new territory was opened continually. One of the strong inducements to colonization was the opportunity to occupy larger areas of land than was possible at home, and as the lands contiguous to the villages were taken up settlers moved out upon unused acres that stretched away into the woods and over the hills, even if they required clearing and the erection of buildings. The Indians were a deterrent, but in the intervals of peace the people ventured out, and, after King Philip's War in New England and the seventeenth century massacres in Virginia had passed, the settlers moved farther afield and planted an increasing number of small colonies up to the falls line of the rivers.

To these infant settlements religion found its way. Its natural hold upon the expanding territory was tenuous, but always a few persons were religiously minded, and new churches were organized with the encouragement of the older organizations wherever it seemed expedient. For a time land was granted only to settlers of satisfactory respectability and character, but in the long run the demand for land was too strong for the maintenance of restrictions. In New England the influence of the Puritans lingered with their descendants, yet it was inevitable that physical weariness and mental absorption in the laborious task of carving estates out of the wilderness, together with the rude customs and moral laxity that are always characteristic of frontier settlements, should weaken the appeal of religion. Even where there were churches, their influence was less than that of the older settlements. In the South, where meeting-houses were less easy of access and the character of the clergy was less religious, the interest in religion was slight. In an official letter a Virginia governor wrote to the British Lords of Trade in 1717 that the frontier folk were "so little

concerned about religion that the children of many of the inhabitants of those frontier settlements are twenty, and some thirty years of age before they are baptized, and some not at all." The Carolina frontier attracted the more shiftless people of Virginia, and they were usually irreligious and lawless. Sometimes they were guilty of getting the Indians drunk and then robbing them, thus arousing the ire of the natives against all white men. With advancing settlement this worthless element drifted farther west out of the reach of ministers and churches.

It was in the newer settlements of the seaboard colonies that the revival of religion had its fittest setting, but the older towns shared in the Great Awakening that followed the outbreak of religious intensity at Northampton under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. The prince of evangelists of that period was George Whitefield of England. His methods did not suit the Anglican Church in which he was reared, and like John Wesley he went his own independent way. Convinced of a personal religious experience that came to him quite apart from ecclesiastical influence, he did not hesitate to carry his gospel to the common people in the fields, when he was not welcome in the churches. He gave a great impulse to Methodism, though he did not agree with Wesley in theology. Together they introduced a vital religion to the working people, which Puritanism had failed to do, and helped to save England from the excesses which eventuated in the Revolution in France.

Whitefield crossed the Atlantic and used his remarkable oratorical abilities in a preaching tour along the coast. The magnetism of his words and his presence drew immense audiences to hear him wherever he went. Crowded out of the meeting-houses, at first because they were too small and later because many church leaders thought he was too strenuous and sensational, he preached out of doors. People rode many miles across country to hear him, leaving the plow in the furrow, as minute



men went to war in the Revolution. The excitement that attended the preaching of Edwards was repeated wherever Whitefield went. A later journey was less successful, and the evangelist felt himself opposed by ministers and churches who did not like his kind of religion.

Whitefield was succeeded by Tennent and Davenport, men of the Middle colonies, who were sometimes injudicious in their criticisms of their opponents. In some sections an unfavorable reaction set in. So unrelenting was the opposition on the part of some churches that a division occurred in the ecclesiastical ranks. "New Light" sympathizers with the revivalists seceded and organized Separatist churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts, especially in the newer settlements, or joined the Baptists who were more evangelistic than the Congregationalists and Presbyterians. These groups became centers of religious ferment, and in several instances their church associations became agencies for the support of itinerant evangelists. In the neighborhood of Philadelphia William Tennent founded the "Log College" for the training of evangelists, men who would not otherwise be at all acceptable to Presbyterians, a body that had strong scruples against an uneducated ministry. That school became a source of supply for religious exhorters over a large area in the Middle and Southern colonies. One of the fruits of the revival period was Princeton College, founded by the progressive Presbyterians in 1746 for high grade ministerial education.

Pastors of parish churches felt an obligation to itinerate at intervals among the remote settlements. As earlier evangelists in colonial days had gone among the Indians of Massachusetts from Martha's Vineyard to the Berkshire Hills, and had gathered them into Christian villages and churches, so in the last half of the eighteenth century zealous preachers visited Cape Cod, pushed up into the granite hills of New Hampshire, and travelled along the inlets and the rocky shore of Maine. Such men went

at their own charges, rode their own horses, and lodged as hospitality offered. Certain New Light evangelists from New England took the long journey to the South, planted revivalist churches and set the people on fire. When the demands became greater than could be met by temporary absences of settled ministers, associations of churches assumed the responsibility and sent out evangelists for periods of three months or longer, from New England to the pioneer settlers and Indians of New York and the Canadian border, and even to the South from Pennsylvania. These men endured hardships on starvation salaries because of their religious devotion.

The Revolutionary war and the French Revolution with its hostility to organized religion had an unfortunate reaction on the religious interest of the American people. Experience proved that war is never productive of spiritual fervor. During the progress of the Revolution the war furnished a common topic of conversation during the week, and supplied the theme of many a pulpit discourse on Sunday. It proved the patriotism of most of the ministers and churches, but it did not stimulate that feeling of good will towards God and man that is so essential an element in vital religion. From France and from the writings of such a patriot as Thomas Paine, influences productive of unbelief in religion affected young men in the colleges, and even some of the statesmen in the country. Lyman Beecher, a student at Yale College in the closing years of the century, testified to the lack of religious interest there and against the irreligious tendency President Timothy Dwight found it desirable to champion the fundamentals of religion in the classroom. Ecclesiastical apologists disputed with local infidels at the popular village forums and local preachers denounced infidelity from their pulpits, but intellectual arguments seldom converted an unbeliever to a genuine faith. By the end of the century a need of vigorous constructive preaching was apparent everywhere.

The popular revival of religion that was noticeable after the turn of the century soon gave evidence of the importance of evangelism, and widespread revivals recurred intermittently to the Civil War. In the older settlements local ministers aroused the people without the help of peripatetic revivalists. Meeting-houses were thronged by attentive audiences. The appeal of the minister was less sensational than it had been sixty years earlier. His argument was built around the idea of the exceeding sinfulness of man and his need of a soul salvation that could be obtained only through faith in the efficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. His effort was to arouse the will of the individual and so bring him to a point where he would confess his sins and find a joyful hope of forgiveness, when he would be received on confession of faith into church membership.

The popular movement began among the Baptists, who were most insistent on a transforming religious experience. It was at this period that their preachers made such an impression upon the people of the South, whites and blacks alike, that their type of religion has been dominant in that region ever since. The Baptists were ably seconded by the Methodists, who in England had perpetuated the warm Arminian theology and fervent preaching of John Wesley, and who at the time of the Revolution commenced in free America a movement that advanced with little interruption until the Methodists became the most successful exponents of a vigorous, efficient religion. At their first coming they were not received cordially in the older settlements, and they resorted to private houses where they gathered a few sympathizers. In most cases they organized classes of the few who accepted their message, and then the itinerant preachers passed on to carry their gospel to other villages. Their first chapels were built on the outskirts of the towns. The growth of Methodism at first was slow but steady. Always some persons thirsted for a religious faith and

experience that the Episcopal or Congregational church did not give, or who were repelled by the hard Calvinism of the Presbyterians or Baptists, or by the insistence of the latter on immersion as necessary to admission into the church. By the end of the century Methodism had won a recognized place even in the older parts of the country.

In the newer portions of the South and West revivals were of a more emotional type. Evangelism had its most sweeping successes in the backwoods settlements where fervent, if ignorant, preachers easily aroused excitement among people who had little to divert them and who were easily stirred to an interest in a religion that had controlled their ancestors. The people of the interior were largely Scotch-Irish in origin. They themselves or their immediate ancestors had lived in the north of Ireland where Scotch people had settled as colonists, and had prospered until economic misfortune and religious persecution had driven thousands of families overseas. Some of them had attempted to find homes in New England, but the Congregationalists did not like their Presbyterianism and were not cordial. Others of them found places of settlement in New York and New Jersey. Still others went to Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. By far the largest numbers found their way into the interior of Pennsylvania and flooded the back country, flowing south in a steady stream between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies. This race that had brought Irish moor and fen under cultivation, and had built up manufacturing industries in the northern towns that rivaled those of manufacturers in England, was destined to prove itself of superior value as an element in the complex of races that was to build America, but for a time the Scotch-Irish created an immigrant problem. They did not harmonize with the tidewater aristocracy of the lower counties of the South. Political disturbances occurred. They were useful for a time as a buffer against the Indians, and during the

Revolution they were a tower of strength to the new republic, but they were an independent people, and the frontier intensified their natural characteristics. In religion they were strong in doctrines, but less exact in their conduct under frontier conditions. Their psychology has survived in the mountain whites of the mountain pockets of the Southland. They did not fit in with the Episcopalians of the lower counties, and in the end they had a prominent part in the disestablishment of the Anglican Church and in the adoption of the principle of religious freedom. They inherited Scotch Presbyterianism, but their uncouth preachers were not liked by the older, better trained Presbyterian clergy, and the time came when the revivalist sympathizers withdrew from the main body and organized their Cumberland Presbytery, as New Light Congregationalists in New England became Separatists. Like other frontier folk, the Scotch-Irish needed religious inspiration and leadership, and they received it from the camp meeting evangelist.

The camp meeting affords a fruitful study in the psychology of religion; it is one of the most interesting examples of the vagaries of the social mind. In spite of its extravagances it had profound effects religiously and morally. The Cane Ridge camp meeting is the best example of many assemblies in the new Southwest. In a clearing near the Cane Ridge meeting-house an immense tent was spread and a platform erected, and the meeting began. The people, glad of any event that would bring them together, and with religious natures intense and unrestrained, gathered in large numbers and yielded readily to the influence of the preacher. Homes and settlements were deserted, fields were left unworked, in vehicles of every sort and on horseback they came from all directions and camped for days around the tent. Continuous excitement prevailed. There was hardly time to eat or sleep. The meetings continued often all night. The grove lighted with camp fires, and the songs and



groans of sinners and saints, created a weird scene, and made realistic the pictured scenes of the other world and the judgment. Naturally under the continued strain of excitement weak nerves gave way and muscular contortions exhibited themselves. Men and women rolled on the ground, foamed at the mouth, jerked their heads, arms, and legs, or even went mad with fear. With the prevailing belief in the deadliness of sin and the horrors of hell, the exhorters had weapons as powerful with their hearers as the anathema and excommunication of the Roman Catholic church of the Middle Ages. It required a brave mind and unusual strength of will to resist the tide of emotion that swept over the thousands of people camping at Cane Ridge, and few resisted successfully. Camp meetings of this popular sort were common in the newer parts of the country; like political rallies they filled a social need in spite of their crudities.

Evangelism of the saner type proved so successful as a means of church growth that ministers of the popular denominations employed evangelistic methods, and depended from time to time on religious spellbinders to stir the impulses of the people. Intermittent revivals of national scope continued up to the Civil War. Certain evangelists, like Finney and Knapp, and later Moody, gained a national reputation. They were especially successful at times of public discouragement and distress, such as happened during the hard times of industrial depression. They drew the people in masses to their meetings, and often numbered their converts by the thousand. Such intensification of the religious impulse had its reaction with many in a loss of interest after a few months, and it would require renewed effort at the next revival period to stir the "backsliders," but many were won to a permanent allegiance to the churches, and remained steady in their purpose and support.

Even the Roman Catholics in time adopted the revival method in their preaching missions. Parish priests made

the preliminary preparations, and then two or more fathers of a special order, gifted in the art of persuasion, visited the parish church and held a series of meetings for several weeks with frequent sermons and practical talks, closing with the solemn reconsecration of the congregation. These missions proved effective in keeping the people tuned to their religion, and resulted frequently in attracting individual Protestants into the Catholic church.

Evangelism on the advancing frontier soon developed into what is known technically as home or domestic missions, and it stimulated an interest in the English missionary enterprises that had been undertaken in India and the Pacific Islands, until the American churches had definitely entered upon an organized foreign mission enterprise of their own. The Evangelical Awakening of the early nineteenth century broadened the minds of the rapidly growing churches. They began to understand something of the obligations of Christian people. They felt a new interest in the unfortunate and oppressed, and before long were experimenting in philanthropy. They saw the necessity of more and better schools for the training of ministers and of their own young people, and presently they conceived new ways of religious education through the Sunday School. All these were consequences of an active interest in a free, voluntary religious organization, not outwardly imposed, but valued the more because it was popularly sustained. The broadening out of religion makes the nineteenth century significant in the history of the American churches.

Still another consequence of freedom was the development of religious organization. In the early part of the nineteenth century a national consciousness grew out of the merging of provincial interests in a national government. Centrifugal forces pulled sections apart at times until the issue between nationalism and sectionalism was fought out in the Civil War, but after President Washington's administration there was a new sense of

the value of the nation and a feeling of loyalty to it. Similarly a denominational consciousness was growing among religious people with the increasing settlement of the country, the easier intercommunication that followed, and the expanding interests that so many people held in common. The religious denominations were not free from differences of personal opinion, group animosities, and the influence of sectional feeling in the nation, but local churches were associating themselves for fellowship and active effort.

About the time of the organization of national government several of the prominent religious bodies completed a national organization. The severance of America from England compelled a reorganization of the Episcopal Church, and after some difficulty it was able to secure properly consecrated American bishops. The Methodist Church, Episcopacy's thriving daughter, organized itself episcopally for its American career. The Presbyterians, who had brought presbyteries into existence, now completed their organization with a General Assembly. All these were accomplished within the space of five years (1784-9). The Catholic Church in America received its first bishop in the same period.

Congregationalists and Baptists were local in their organization. However strict the Puritan governments might be in maintaining ecclesiastical standards in colonial New England, Congregationalists rejected both episcopacy and presbytery, and after experimenting with advisory synods, abandoned the idea even of associations of churches.

Following the example of the London Missionary Society of England, Congregationalists and Presbyterians joined in a "Plan of Union" for missionary purposes in 1801, but no Congregational church was bound by it, and after the experience of a few decades the two denominations went their several ways. Yet the spirit of independence, strengthened by the victory of the principle

of voluntarism, which might naturally be expected to prevent any close association of churches, gave way before the growing conviction that the churches had a common missionary task. Both Congregationalists and Baptists organized voluntary societies to extend evangelistic enterprises among the settlements, and in the second decade of the new century both denominations organized for foreign missions.

It could not be foreseen at that date that foreign missions would become one of the greatest civilizing forces of modern times; that in India and on its outlying frontiers hundreds of thousands of converts to Christianity would be gathered into churches, and the churches of different denominations within a century would be leading the Christian world towards ecclesiastical federation and unity; that the closed doors of China and Japan would be opened to the teacher and the physician, and that Christian schools and churches would weaken the hold of Buddhism and Shintoism upon the Orientals; that Africa and the islands of the Pacific would surrender their savagery and paganism, and become transformed here and there into civilized regions; and that within a century the missionary leaders would be talking about evangelizing the whole world within a generation. What the church people of those days saw was the picture of millions of heathen perishing eternally without a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in pity they were willing to give their money and their lives to the work of rescue.

The conception of religion of that day was narrow. Christianity was the only religion that was true; all others should be destroyed. Divine grace had sent Christ into the world, had ordained that a few should put faith in him as a Savior of their souls, but that the large majority would perish in their sins. The great task of the church was to bring saving faith to those whom God should call. Preaching was the means of appeal to indi-

viduals and congregations, and churches provided and maintained the preachers. The sermon was the chief factor in all the attempts at evangelizing the people of the American frontier and of the foreign mission areas, and as soon as the people gave evidence of an experience of saving grace in their hearts they were admitted to church membership. In this way there was a double gain, to the individuals and to the churches.

When the interest of the churches had broadened to include foreign missions among their activities, they had not gone beyond the evangelizing emphasis. But circumstances forced upon the missionaries and the sustaining boards a larger task. It did not require much experience to prove that preaching and gathering converts into churches was only the initial step in a process of Christian culture. On the foreign mission fields of the East Christian converts must be segregated from their pagan neighbors and taught how to live sane, moral lives, and their children must be provided with Christian schools that they might be brought into the Christian faith and prepared for Christian service. Some of them must be trained as Christian pastors, teachers and workers, so that institutions of higher grade were provided. Physically wretched, the people needed physicians and hospitals. Orphaned or uncared for children needed rearing in Christian homes. Ignorant of the rudiments of modern industry or agriculture, and even of decent home life, the masses of the people needed patient instruction from those who shared in a higher civilization. Because of these needs the missionary enterprise broadened to include the applications of Christianity to Eastern life. Vigorous opposition to these larger conceptions of Christian obligation was felt by the missionary societies. Prominent among such opponents were the Primitive Baptists of the Southwest. Only a moderate proportion of the churches of the various denominations took an active interest in missions. The societies were merely volun-



tary associations of individuals who were interested enough to contribute to missionary support. Yet in spite of some opposition and more indifference American churches contributed to foreign missions with increasing generosity and intelligence, and the missionary enterprise became a factor of great importance in denominational organization.

## V. RELIGION ON THE FRONTIER

THE spur that drove the missionary overseas sent his fellow out definitely upon the advancing frontier of America. By the frontier is meant the edge of settlement as emigration moved west from the Atlantic seaboard. It was continually shifting, not always with regularity, but always with motion forward. Before the Revolution was over migration had crossed the Appalachian ridge and established a new frontier in Kentucky and Tennessee, and shortly afterward in southern Ohio along the Ohio River. This new frontier had been advanced beyond the Mississippi by 1830, and three and a half million persons were living beyond the Alleghanies. After that the advance was over the prairies instead of through the forests.

This migration to the West was chiefly Southern, much of it from the Southern highlands. The plantation system of the coast plains with its landed aristocracy and its slave economy did not agree well with the disposition and ideals of the free settlers of the interior. With few impedimenta they moved easily farther west, and they carried their idealism and religious peculiarities with them. Meantime New England emigration was getting a slow start. The development of the coast fisheries, the rapidly expanding commerce, and then the growth of the manufacturing industries that were to make New England famous, absorbed the attention of most of the people. A few New Englanders settled early in Ohio. The opening of the Erie Canal, combined with commercial decline and financial stress, set the Yankee in motion. He filled up western New York, opened up the Western Reserve

in Ohio, and pushed on into the Lake region of the Middle West, taking with him his community life and his discipline of character, and to some extent his ecclesiastical organization.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century the frontier edge had passed to the Missouri River, and within ten years settlers from North and South were fighting out the slave issue in Kansas. By 1880 the frontier line ran through northern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, through South Dakota, and up the western rivers. Before that time it had leaped the Rockies and advanced to the Pacific coast in California and Oregon. By 1890 so much of the interior had been entered that the Government declared that the frontier could be said scarcely to exist any longer. A hundred years had seen the successful penetration of the continent from the Alleghanies to the Pacific Ocean.

The western movement was undertaken partly from a love of adventure, partly from an economic motive. The industrious New Englander found better lands in the Mohawk valley and by Lake Erie. His success in exploiting them attracted a stream of migrating followers. The Southerner in the bluegrass fields of Kentucky and the rich river bottoms of the Ohio valley found more room for expansion than Virginia and Carolina could give him. Land speculation lured some. Economic disturbances consequent upon the Revolution drove others afield. The opening of the country north of the Ohio with a free government according to the Ordinance of 1787, and the purchase of the vast territory of Louisiana west of the Mississippi in 1803, attracted settlers with the limitless opportunity of expansion.

Few migrations in history can compare with the exodus from the East to the West in America, and the supplementary migration from Europe to the American West. The changed environment deeply affected the life and character of the emigrants. Whole families were

torn up by the roots, and sometimes the transplanting was not a success. It continued over so long a time and so large an area that it affected the destinies of a continent. America has been vitalized by the swift life currents of the frontier. The story of its settlement has thrilled every patriot with red blood in his veins. The trek of the pioneer across the mountain range that barred the coast plain from the hinterland; the fording of streams on the other side, and the threading of forests and slopes that formed the second line of advance; the fight with the red man who added to the terrors of the borderland, and who watched with misgiving the progress of the advance guard of civilization; the building of a hut in a clearing by a stream or spring; the emergence upon the prairie, and the erection of a sod house for the family until time and the crops made a better home possible; the far gleam of the western mountains and the beckoning of the lands beyond to those whose restlessness drew them on toward the setting sun—these make up a story that is one of the epics of history.

The effects of the migration were felt in the East. In the South they were not so serious as in the North. With its large plantations and negro labor the South was as well off without its surplus population. In New England and the Middle colonies the loss was not keenly felt as long as families continued large, and only a few from each community yielded to the western fever. When these conditions changed, coupled with the attraction of the growing cities, the decline of Eastern rural communities became marked. In a single decade one Rhode Island county lost more than a thousand of its inhabitants, a New Hampshire county lost nearly six hundred, and half of the counties in Vermont showed a decline. In 1860 Indiana and Michigan together contained fifty thousand persons who had been born in New England, Ohio and Wisconsin each had as many, and Illinois boasted

more than sixty thousand—a total of nearly two hundred and twenty thousand persons.

This numerical loss to New England was a significant gain to the Middle West. In that section, which was destined to become the dominant part of the nation, the New England qualities that had shaped the colonial character of the North were sown for a generous harvest. Rich in community institutions and strong in its moral fiber, New England life was a healthy strain, and it generated a sturdy stock for the building of the new America. Not less significant was the contribution of the Scotch-Irish who were most numerous among the early pioneers. They gave to the first period of migration the strong individualism and will power that was so necessary for the front line of continent conquerors, just as the Yankees provided the elements that were necessary for building enduring settlements.

The importance of the West in American history can hardly be overestimated. Economically the values of the West are immeasurable. The mines, the forests, the agriculture, the lake and river and railroad traffic are impressive reminders. Politically the West has had a commanding influence. Ohio long ago wrested from Virginia the honor of producing Presidents of the nation, and mountain and prairie senators and congressmen dispute with the East the leadership of public affairs. Upon American social life the broad, free temper of the Westerner has made its permanent impression. Psychologically the West was a stimulant. It fostered self-reliance and a self-determination that has made the West a power to be felt in all departments of life.

For a long time few opportunities were offered for cultivating the finer qualities. Frontier life is close to nature. It is in the raw. Its passions are elemental. It reacts emotionally rather than intellectually. A log cabin political campaign or a religious revival appealed to the love of the dramatic and sensational. They were expres-



sions of the frontier mind that craves excitement and feeds on the bizarre and extravagant. The pioneer, released from the restraints of the older communities, coarsened by his struggle with beasts and savage men for existence, lacking the mental and moral poise that comes from social contacts, easily fell into bad habits, and was guilty of drunkenness, licentiousness, profanity, gambling, and general coarseness of speech and manners. That was true of the pioneer period everywhere, from the Kentucky of Daniel Boone to the mining camps with which Bret Harte became familiar.

Moral delinquency has not always meant irreligion. Presbyterians, Baptists and Quakers were among the vanguard of emigrants. They knew the fundamental doctrines. They had religious phrases on their tongues, even unction on lips stained with tobacco juice and moistened with white liquor. But they failed to apply religion to life. When religion came to them, it specialized in revivals from which moral lapses were easy, and men could be depended on to be sounder in theology than in ethical conduct and good will.

The people of the frontier were not without occasional preaching, when itinerating evangelists came among them, but they lacked the church to conserve their emotion and make it fruitful. The preacher was their one inspiration, the prophet and savior of the frontier. Pushing his horse through a wilderness of forest, braving swollen streams and the danger of a savage foe, pressing on through summer heat and winter storms, stopping for a meal in a lonely cabin, sleeping where night found him with his saddle bags for a pillow, pondering on the Eternal while his horse foraged for noon rations, preaching in a house or out-of-doors wherever he could find a group to listen, he blazed a path for law and order, for morality and religion, in the new country beyond the mountains.

The pioneer was followed soon by the permanent set-

tlar. Church people from the East sometimes settled near one another and held occasional religious meetings. Instances occurred where the emigrants took their church organization along with them. But usually religion was represented by scattered individuals who lost connection with any church and became quite indifferent to the claims of religion. The virile force that rekindled their interest was the preacher who rode his circuit through the settlements, the home missionary who came to the lonely family on the farm at sunset, as he had visited the pioneer clearing in the forest, sat with its members and talked quietly at the fireside, and was off at sunrise to carry to others the benign influence that was the saving salt of the countryside. He gained a response wherever the frontier went, because he found men and women with the same longings for faith and hope as in the East. On the outstretching prairie beneath a wide-arching sky, among the foothills of the Rockies where the eye sees deep vistas in the dry air, there eternal issues had a significance felt more deeply than in the circumscribed towns back East.

The pioneering period dates from the era of the Revolution. In sixty years the vanguard of migration had come out upon the prairie, and the second period of group settlement had begun, with greater possibilities for civilization and moral and religious culture. The nation was interested in internal development. National roads were being built, and railroads were on the point of projection. The frontiersman with his innate democracy was learning his political strength and demanding a share in national management under the leadership of Andrew Jackson. Not yet conscious of what it would be, the West was awakening to a vision of its future.

As settlement increased, better organized evangelism was needed. In its beginnings the home mission enterprise was not planned. Its development was genetic in character. But the danger that the material interests of

the homesteader would make him callous to the finer sensibilities and the deeper spiritual concerns compelled the Eastern churches to consider the problem of his religious destitution.

In religion the West has been both an asset and a liability. As an asset it has broadened the horizon of church interest, compelling home missions to keep pace with the advancing frontier. It has helped to make the church democratic, and has responded most willingly to the more democratic among the religious denominations. The West has had a leveling influence; it appraises a man for his real worth as a man, not for his wealth or position. The missionary demands made upon church people have cultivated generosity, until American Christianity has become renowned for its beneficence. The West has affected ecclesiastical organization, for missionary societies are conspicuous among the coöperative organizations of the churches. Home missionary activity has resulted in the multiplication of churches and the addition of millions to church membership.

Religion on the frontier has been a liability in that it required continual maintenance by outside effort. The people who had the will and the ability to carry on a church in any community without the assistance of a missionary society were few. Those hard-working rural folk, living close to the soil and tending to become materialized, no doubt needed an awakening to moral and religious values. The creation of permanent ecclesiastical centers where regular preaching could be maintained and the conventional forms of religious observance could be set up, was impossible until the farm cultivator and his family had succeeded the more nomadic hunter and ranchman and had settled down within reach of neighbors. A lone family in a forest clearing or on the prairie could not constitute a flourishing church. Church people were drawn away from the villages and churches back East, but they did not become an ecclesiastical asset any-

where else until they were numerous enough locally to maintain their own churches. Their religion needed to be conserved until it should become an active force once more. The religious liability was assumed by the older churches of the East. They carried the emigrants on an ecclesiastical mortgage. They believed that there were potential assets in the frontiersman, as there were in the land, but it would take time to develop values. To turn the ecclesiastical liability into an asset was the task of the home mission societies of the evangelical denominations, a task that took approximately seventy-five years (1825-1900).

The story of American home missions is one of the great chapters of church history. It has never been told adequately. Its significance for the nation has never been realized fully. It is as thrilling as the story of the pioneer settlers, as dramatic as the tales of Indian battles and buffalo hunts on the plains, as consequential as anything that three centuries of national progress have produced. Nothing in the history of modern Europe can compare in scope or importance with the American exodus to the West, and nothing in the history of Catholic mediaevalism or the Protestant Reformation was more epochal in its consequences than the peaceful conquest of the Western mind and heart for Christian ideals.

The task was so immense that it required special ecclesiastical machinery. As early as 1801 the Presbyterians and Congregationalists formulated their Plan of Union for foreign and home mission work. In 1813 the Massachusetts and Connecticut missionary societies sent out investigators to make a survey through the older parts of settlement. Everywhere they found moral laxness and religious destitution, everywhere a dearth of religious inspiration and leadership. In certain localities they found Presbyterian ministers earning their living by school teaching, while the people lacked the institutions of religion. Within the next twelve years the Connecticut

society, at that time the strongest of the missionary organizations, sent out two hundred missionaries and organized four hundred Presbyterian and Congregational churches. By that time a national organization seemed desirable, and Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed churches combined in the American Home Missionary Society, organized in 1826.

The Baptists organized their home missionary society in 1832, Jonathan Going, a prominent minister in the East, resigning his pulpit to become its secretary and one of its active agents on the ground. Baptists with their adaptability to frontier conditions, Methodists with their simple message of divine goodwill and their superb organization, took the lead in evangelizing the far territory, and to them chiefly is due the credit of pioneering. Presbyterians built up the churches in the settled towns; Episcopalians coming later found most of the ground preëmpted; Congregationalists sacrificed their denominational interests that the universal gospel might abound.

The home missionary societies of the East were directed by men who were moved by two strong convictions. The first was the obligation to preach religion to individuals, the other a feeling that unless the Protestant churches should actively push their propaganda, either Catholicism would win new territory through European emigration or the vast reaches of the West would be occupied by irreligious Americans and the standards of the whole nation would be imperilled by that section.

By 1835 a considerable part of the Middle West was taking on the characteristics of permanent settlement. The farmer cultivator had replaced the pioneer who had cleared the land, and with the increased help of machinery he was to become the producer of agricultural wealth. For him must be the church of the village, its Sunday school, and its gatherings for prayer or sociability. From eastern seminaries theological graduates went as groups to several of the western states, Turner, Gaylord, and



nine others settling in Iowa, others going later to Kansas and even to Washington. Whole-souled men and women, like Marcus Whitman and his wife, pushed beyond the Rockies and helped to open the Oregon country. When the Episcopalians were ready, they appointed their local clergymen in strategic situations and appointed over them Bishop Kemper, who bore the familiar title of "Bishop of All-out-doors." The pastor of a home mission church was poorly paid. Sometimes he put up his own shack and helped to build a meeting-house. Often he had to depend on a stipend of a few hundred dollars from the missionary society supplemented by whatever the people were minded to give, and voluntarism was not always a generous giver.

The minister was accompanied by the school master, or himself added the teaching function to that of preaching. Some of the pioneer leaders of the church were far-seeing men, and they realized how much fresh water colleges could do for the growing West. The home missionary had a vision of a settled future when a school would be as necessary as the church. One of them founded a colony in the Western Reserve of Ohio. He selected the first settlers, all of them professing Christians. He organized a church in the first log cabin of the settlement. Soon followed a school and a public library, and within eight years from the first white settlement in the district an academy was founded, to grow with the increase of population into a college of high standing. A Methodist minister and a Catholic priest were leaders in the organization of the first state university, that of Michigan, a school that served as a model for similar institutions and that was opened for both sexes. A Congregational minister was the first superintendent of public instruction for the State of Michigan. Baptists planted a college in every state as settlement moved westward. Of a certain Presbyterian minister who had worked wonders in the Far West it was said:

"He *must* found colleges, create presbyteries and synods, inaugurate missions, and organize awakened desire into permanent institutions."

Among organizations that had grown out of the evangelical awakening at the beginning of the century were Sunday school and tract societies. The American Sunday School Union, an undenominational organization, sent out agents into the West, who reënforced the efforts of the denominational agencies. Bible and tract societies supplied a religious literature that was to be increased later by the publication departments of the denominations, and colporteurs followed the pioneers far to the west to their lonely ranches and farms.

Beyond the great central valley were the wide spaces of the plains and the towering ranges of the Great Divide. Caravans of prairie schooners began to drag their slow length across the plains; venturesome prospectors dug their picks into the mountains in search of silver and gold; ranchmen drove the Indian and the buffalo from the plateaus and substituted cattle to multiply by the thousands. Not yet did the pioneer dream of the possibilities of irrigated land in the arid sections, or of the tremendous energy to be released from the water power of the mountain slopes and glens. Those features were to be visualized by a later generation. But men of faith and vision knew that the vast country of the mountains would draw to itself adventurous settlers, and they undertook to do their part in making the life of those settlers clean and pure and religious. To the ranches and among the mines and in infant settlements beyond the railroads went the colporteurs with Bible and tract; for people who needed the spur of religion and the comfort of eternal hope the evangelist pushed his jaded horse over endless miles to a meeting place; over the tiny churches that sprang up here and there the missionary societies placed shepherds of souls and gave general oversight to a bishop or a regional society. As settlement grew they planted

schools, where the railroad went they sent a chapel car, when the automobile came they supplied a church on wheels with a gasoline engine. At a convenient point they held a conference of ministers to cheer the lonely men at their solitary stations. When the field of activity was hopelessly large for one denomination, the societies pooled their energies and made plans for coöperation and a division of the field. Such wisdom did not come at once. In the Middle West where every hamlet expected to become a thriving city too many rival churches were planted for the good of the community, and whole regions that failed to grow became overchurched with struggling ecclesiastical enterprises of every name, while broad reaches of open farm country were insufficiently cultivated, but experience and a better spirit taught a better way in the Far West.

Nor were the Indians neglected in the swift coming of the white man. As preachers went among the Indians in colonial times when the Eastern country was filling up, so under home mission auspices evangelists visited the tepees of the Western Indians and spoke a religious message. The missionaries helped to atone for the neglect of the best interests of the Indians, of which the Government was too often guilty. It was a minister who encouraged the Government at Washington to open Indian reservations, and helped to put one into operation in Kansas. It was a half-breed Indian, educated at an Eastern college, who planned Ottawa University in the same state for Indian education.

During the same period and later devoted Catholic missionaries gave themselves to frontier evangelism among both settlers and Indians. The same spirit of sacrifice that was exhibited by Protestant home missionaries sent them out into the Mississippi valley and beyond. Before the nineteenth century was half over they had pushed through to the mountain states and the Pacific. Father de Smet had a more powerful influence over the Indians

than any other man of his time, acting as a diplomatic mediator for Government as well as for the church, and contributing to the safety of the frontier. In an inland region where their ecclesiastical influence was feared as unfriendly by the Protestant agencies the Catholics proved their worth as religious pioneers and friends of the settlers.

After the Civil War was over the home mission agencies of the Protestant churches went into the South, at a time when that prostrate section could not, if it would, give adequate aid to freedmen. The societies planted schools and appointed teachers to guide the first essays in the path of liberty. To those schools is due the initial training of the leaders of the colored race for their new citizenship. On the Pacific slope where Orientals entered the country from China and Japan missionaries introduced the same gospel that others were preaching to the home lands of the Orient. Over the border to Mexico and out to the islands of the Caribbean other missionaries went to proselyte among the Catholics of the Latin lands.

The home missionary task became complicated by an increasing immigration of Old World races into the American interior. The Irish did not ordinarily penetrate to the farms beyond the Alleghanies, but the Germans and Scandinavians moved to the West in large numbers and settled, the former east of the Mississippi, the latter west and north. These two peoples were of the finest Continental stock, but they needed to be assimilated by the American, and it was part of the task of the home mission societies to Americanize as well as to evangelize them. Most of them were Lutherans, because they had been brought up in the state churches of northern Europe. Lutheran most of them remained, but the distinctly American denominations gathered recruits from the more progressive among them. Oftentimes there were enough of these to constitute foreign-speaking churches and even associations of churches. These needed leaders, and to

find them proved one of the most difficult problems of the societies. Reactionary leaders would keep the people a race-conscious group, that would make little religious or social progress. A progressive man would be very likely to hasten the process of merging the group into American fellowship, and this was sure to be resented by some of the conservatives among the foreigners. To guide the foreign-speaking churches was a peculiarly delicate task.

The decade from 1880 to 1890 is a landmark in home mission history. The older immigration gave place to the new. Southern and eastern Europeans swarmed into the Eastern cities and mining centers. The old frontier in the West ceased to exist, except as locally certain districts remained unsettled. The societies had to give their attention to the newcomers in the East, and to socialize their own methods in distinction from the individual approach that had been usual in the West. A new chapter opened in American church history.

The frontier period of the history of religion in America had its consequences in the forms of church organization, in the development of certain characteristics in religious groups, in diversity of sects, and in an intensification of the independency that was won in the East when the frontier was a few miles back from the coast.

The frontier called the national home mission societies into being, with all that is included in their history, and it was the stimulus to the organization of state conventions and conferences where episcopal organization was not provided. The state body brought into association missionary churches scattered over a wide area, and served in coöperation with the home mission society or supplementary to it as a missionary agency for church extension. In a denomination like the Baptist the state convention supplied an important link between the local church and the whole denomination, and the state superintendent of missions had a function of oversight of de-



pendent churches that approximated that of a Methodist or Episcopal bishop. With few exceptions the denominational machinery of Baptists, Congregationalists and Disciples is geared to missions, home and foreign. Boards of direction, committees of investigation, agencies of promotion among the churches, budgets, campaigns for systematic giving, are all consequences of missionary operations. Even the location of denominational headquarters may be determined by missionary relations or exigencies. With much truth it has been said: "Whatever its creed or form of polity, the main business in America hitherto has been geographical expansion and its organization has reflected this necessity."

Another consequence of the frontier is the intensification of individualism and democracy among the churches. These were characteristics of the people of the frontier. Their whole manner of life strengthened those characteristics. It had to be so. So many families lived remote from one another that they were thrown on their own resources. Absence of physicians and lawyers made them their own doctors and jurists. In religion they had their own decided religious opinions. When they did come together they found themselves on approximately the same level, and as a group they settled their group questions in democratic fashion. It was inevitable that this individualism and democracy should dominate ecclesiastical organization. Associations and conventions had come into existence almost always when the churches were frontier churches. The people that organized and constituted them could not escape the sway of those principles. It is not alone the Congregationalists and Baptists whose organization is democratic. Neither Methodists nor Episcopalians have an overhead authority for administration that is not subject to the decisions of the democracy assembled in General Conference or Convention. The power of revision and veto is in the hands of the people, even in those denominations. So much the more true is it of

Disciples, Congregationalists and Baptists. The ecclesiastical organization is true to the spirit of America, and the American spirit gets its temper from the frontier.

The independency of the frontier folk has produced two other ecclesiastical consequences in the United States. One is the multiplication of sects. The same elements that were characteristic of the early history of the English Independents showed their presence on the frontier. There was a tendency for denominations to divide and to send off divergent branches that agitated for specific changes in doctrine and polity. There was a rivalry among these sects for a place in the sun. Each of them, no matter how closely they resembled one another in most respects, must have its own meeting-house and its own pastor. Each must play a prominent part in the ecclesiastical leadership of the community. This overchurching tendency has been most disastrous in its effects. Least serious is the waste of money and of effort, the duplication of tasks, the rivalries and jealousies among the churches. The reaction on the communities, on the people outside of the churches, has been such as to make them skeptical of the value of ecclesiastical religion, and unquestionably to weaken the morale of the nation. It is only within recent years that the efforts of the Home Missions Council in the direction of comity and coördination have begun to counteract the evil influences of decades of the narrow denominationalism that individual independence and democratic freedom have engendered.

The other consequence is an independence among local churches that makes them critical of the denominational organizations, sometimes secessionist in practice, and usually suspicious of the motives and beliefs of denominational leaders. No more progressive and generally intelligent people are to be found in the rank and file of church membership in this country than the people of the Middle West. Their experience has taught them not to be afraid of experiments. Their education in the state

universities that they have built up has given them trained intelligence. But where people have grown up under frontier conditions they have fixed opinions in theology, opinions that have been received traditionally and retained unchanged from frontier days. These have tended to keep them unprogressive in their religious beliefs and to make them distrust the leaders of the schools who are less conservative. The farther west one goes, where the frontier influence still more strongly abides, the more decidedly conservative church people appear to be in their theology and the more responsive to primitive or provincial ideas. All this reacts unfavorably on ecclesiastical progress.

The frontier in America has passed into history. Home mission societies have been turning more of their attention to the new frontier of the cities of the East. There, they believe, are the problems of America's future, where the races meet and fuse, where the rivalries and antagonisms of trade and industry provoke the clash of classes and the contradictions of races, where life is lived under the urge of the struggle for prestige and power. If religion fails in America, it will fail most colossally in the cities. The churches that have come into being on the frontier will have to solve their own difficulties. The people of the vanishing frontier of the West are capable of taking care of themselves. But the influences of the frontier will linger long in ecclesiastical circles. There will be a need of broadening, of culturing, so to speak, a need of faith in the spirit of man to work his way free from the limitations that have rested upon him as a religious being. The nation needs the idealism of the West, its democratic spirit, its intensity of conviction, but the churches of the West, at least, need to socialize their individualism, make efficient their democracy, and apply their idealism to the insistent problems that vex twentieth century civilization at home and abroad.

Over against any limitation of theological outlook are

the moral values that have been preserved or generated by home missions. "Eliminat  from Western society the silent moral forces, all of them practically the creation of home missionary churches; the respect for law which they inculcate; the temperance they practice and help to enforce; the safeguarding of the young; the security of property and life; the cultivation of high moral ideals; the claims of humanity which they teach and practice;— blot out all those forces which make up the morale of a commonwealth, socially, religiously, and politically, and something of the immeasurable value of the home missionary movement as related to order, morality, civic virtue, and national prosperity, would be appreciated."

## VI. ADVENTURES IN ALTRUISM

THE same impulse that sent missionaries to pagan peoples and into the American West prompted beneficent enterprises for the unfortunate. Christian sympathy felt keenly the weakness of the intemperate and the misery of their families, was distressed over the evils of the prison system, and questioned the rightfulness of slavery. The reformers of the period had no understanding of social science, no conception of the necessity of getting at the root causes of the evils, but their feelings were stirred and they were eager to relieve suffering. Later came a clearer understanding of the nature of society and the character of social relations, both in the actual and the ideal, and reform became more constructive and systematic.

It was the Wesleyan movement that first supplied the humanitarian impulse. Methodism itself did much to accomplish the moral salvation of England. It carried religion to the common people of England. It did more than that. It impregnated groups of persons high enough up in the social scale to act as leaders for reform, and through them set in motion a distinct effort to ameliorate bad conditions. John Howard, a London Baptist, gave his life to the improvement of the prisons, saturated as they were with filth and obscenity as well as criminality. Thomas Clarkson, a Quaker, and William Wilberforce, an Anglican, agitated for the abolition of slavery in the British dominion. Robert Hall, an eminent Baptist preacher, championed the cause of the trade unions at a time when they were unpopular, condemning those "who withhold their hire from those who reaped the field." Thomas Chalmers, a leader of the Scotch Presbyterians,



worked out in Glasgow a scheme for the scientific application of charity to the poor, blazing a trail for the charity organization societies that have become a normal part of modern city institutionalism. Father Mathew, an Irish Catholic priest, preached a crusade for total abstinence, and John Bright, "the most representative Nonconformist of the nineteenth century," was an earnest supporter of temperance.

The contrast between the hardships of English working folk and the relative comfort and immensely greater opportunity of Americans was noticeable. The habit of New England thrift sent many women and children into the workshops in such cities as Lawrence and Lowell, where the confinement was often irksome and the hours were long, but Americans were accustomed to work long and hard for small returns, and the social intercourse afforded by the workroom and the factory town was so agreeable to those whose outlook had been restricted to the isolated farm or the small village that it was a compensation for the confinement. If work in the factory or on the New England farm became too irksome, the laborer might return home or pull up stakes and go west.

As manufacturing increased in New England, cities became congested with the families of the workers, and emigration to the West was impossible for such workers, the irksome conditions of the factory and the home created a spirit of dissatisfaction and insurgency, and contributed to the organization of labor unions. Through them working men agitated for shorter hours and better wages. This movement did not elicit the sympathy of religious people, as might have been expected, because religion did not as yet move easily in social channels and because those who usually molded the church mind were the owners of factory machinery, the employers of labor. They were men who had worked hard to get ahead, and it hardly occurred to them in those days that hard work

was not healthy to body or mind under the new industrial conditions. The industrial awakening of the churches had to wait for a generation or two.

In spite of the undesirable conditions in the factory towns, the long hours of toil and the small wages, the purchasing power of money was greater than now and the conditions of living were better than in rural or industrial England. Americans in general did not suffer hunger, and while everybody drank liquor of some kind, it was not in an effort to drown misery. Shiftless and unfortunate persons there were, of course, scattered among the colonies and the newer states, ne'er-do-wells who never got on, sinners and sots who served as a foil to set off the general prosperity. Rude as comforts and customs were, the people of America were better off than Englishmen.

The churches were conservers of morals and religion. Everywhere the meeting-house reminded the people of moral and spiritual obligation, and religion was a real force in the home and the community. Fathers of families had not forgotten to conduct family prayers and to say grace at meals. Families went to church together, sat in the family pew, and in due time one by one the children took upon themselves the responsibilities of church membership. Ministers made pastoral calls upon their flock, and were entertained at dinner or supper as honored guests. Men and women were willing to practice self-denial to pay the minister's salary and contribute to sending the gospel to the heathen. On the frontier where it was easy to dispense with religion and compromise with morals, the preacher was given a hearty welcome, and the whole community helped to put up a shack for a meeting-house. Religion of that sort might not be very enlightened, theology might be antiquated, and the social application of the gospel might be little understood, nevertheless religion was a vital force. Yet with the disposition to exploit material or human resources, per-

sonal hardships and social inequalities were sure to appear. The law favored the master rather than the worker. There are records of overwork, injustice and cruelty. Attempts of the workers to band together that they might make their demands more effective were met with opposition. When the trade unions began to make their power felt in the thirties, they complained of inequality of taxation, of unfair credit and banking systems, of imprisonment for debt, and of insufficient educational privileges. Against these the struggle of insurgency went on for a time, as the political and religious struggles had been waged, and the worst abuses were remedied.

Certain social evils were less easily removed. Inherited from England, and not realized as serious evils, or intrenched in the economic or political system and so defended by their beneficiaries, they were apparently fixed in the body social. Such was the evil of intemperance and the evil of slavery. Such, too, were imprisonment for debt, and the harsh punishments visited upon prisoners, the disgraceful condition of the prisons and the promiscuous mixing of the inmates; the common practice of gambling and the resort to lottery to raise money for eleemosynary purposes; the callousness to the physical suffering of animals and even of human beings; the indifference to the fate of the Indian who was driven steadily westward to make way for the settler greedy for his land. Here was a broad field for reform, and boundless opportunity for the reformer.

The movement for reform was undertaken first by individuals who reacted more sensitively to human need than the majority of citizens. Doubtless the humanitarianism of these individuals was quickened by religion, but few churches interested themselves in unfortunate individuals or classes. Church people in general believed that misery was the consequence of individual sin or of the frown of the Almighty. There were groups of religious people who took an uncommon interest in misfortune or op-

pression. Quakers, Unitarians, and Free Baptists were especially sympathetic. Quakers have always been in the forefront of any humanitarian enterprise. Unitarians, with their emphasis on the worth of man, were quicker than most other sects to see that philanthropy was essentially religious. They organized societies for the improvement of seamen, for the suppression of intemperance, for peace, and for the employment of the poor. They supplied leaders of social reform in excess of their proportionate membership.

A particular social evil that was inherited from the older social order of Europe was imprisonment for debt. The poor man had no escape from his creditor. If he was unable to pay, his last bit of property could be taken to satisfy the claim. No law had yet been passed giving him the right to keep a minimum of his possessions. When his property was gone, his person might be seized and confined in one of the horrible prisons that were characteristic of America as well as England before the days of prison reform, there to remain until the sum was paid. Charitable people were willing to help provide food and clothing to the prisoner, but apparently never thought of improving the wretched surroundings.

Prison reform was long hindered in the United States because of political influence and interference, but the story of the nineteenth century is a story of gradual gains. The colonies started with the handicap of criminals dumped by the mother country on these shores from 1619 to the Revolution. Other persons were shut up for all sorts of offences. Quakers were put to hard labor in Massachusetts for interfering with the religion of the colony. The prisons were nurseries of crime and breeding places of disease. Most of them had underground dungeons, used for the confinement of incorrigibles. One prison in Connecticut was itself underground, formerly a copper mine, reached only by a ladder, dripping with moisture, yet in wooden pens below convicts were fastened

head and foot and kept for years. In Worcester, Northampton, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia conditions that beggar description were found by investigators.

Reform began in Pennsylvania in 1786. The Quakers and an improvement society of Philadelphians took the lead. The Pennsylvania legislature was invoked, and the penal code was studied and improved. Extreme and degrading punishments were abolished, and the death penalty was removed for a few offences. Wholesome but not severe labor was provided for; the abominable practice of drinking in prisons at the common expense was ended. New Hampshire and New York made improvements before the end of the eighteenth century, and others followed in the early years of the nineteenth.

No religious instruction was given to prisoners until after the Revolution. The first sermon in the Philadelphia penitentiary was preached literally at the mouth of a cannon to prevent disorder and rioting. In the north-eastern part of the country it became the custom about 1830 to supply the prisons with Bibles, to hold Sunday schools and to appoint chaplains, but the churches had no conception of the larger responsibility of probing to the roots of crime and trying to find remedies. Beginnings were made in secular instruction, and prison libraries and debating societies came into existence. These reforms owed something to the sympathy of those who had been sensitized by the spirit of Christianity, and in large degree by those who were members of Christian churches.

Crime and vice were frequently the result of intemperance. In 1820 over seven gallons per capita of distilled spirits were consumed. Liquors were considered indispensable on all social occasions. Even among the clergy the decanter was on the sideboard and drunkenness was not uncommon. The awakening came early in the nineteenth century. Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia wrote a paper showing the ill effects of intemperance upon the physical system, and in 1811 presented



a thousand copies of it to the Presbyterian General Assembly with a letter urging action. A committee was appointed to consider measures of reform. This action marked the beginning of denominational activity in the interest of temperance. Within twenty years more than a thousand local organizations and eleven State societies gave evidence of the widespread interest in the subject. The impulse was stimulated by six temperance sermons given wide circulation by Lyman Beecher of Litchfield, Connecticut.

Total abstinence societies with their hundreds of thousands of pledge takers testified to the strength of the reaction against indulgence in liquors. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in its name recognized the religious motive in the campaign. Experiments in political prohibition were made and a Prohibition party started. Ministers of churches made up much of the strength of the party and were the most vigorous advocates of the policy of prohibition. During the second half of the century a healthy growth of sentiment developed against the liquor traffic. The moral arguments of reformers were reinforced by the economic waste. The enormous expenditure of hundreds of millions yearly for such indulgence as compared with less than three hundred millions for schools and one-tenth of that number for ministers' salaries was thought-provoking. Added to this was the loss of wages of workingmen through drunkenness. Intemperance was a well-known concomitant of ill health, crime, and the social evil.

The organization of the Anti-Saloon League in Ohio in 1893 was a federation of existing agencies with the active support of the churches, and became the chief agency in sweeping the country twenty-five years later for constitutional prohibition.

The crying evil of the age was negro slavery. The cupidity of European traders could be blamed for fastening the institution upon America, but Americans ac-

quiesced in it wherever it was economically profitable. On the small farms of the North slave labor was of small value, and in the households negro labor was less efficient than hired help. It was different in the South. In the older Southern states slavery seemed likely to die out until cotton became a profitable crop. Even then the slaves were treated paternally, and most of the negroes were better off under the influences of American civilization than they had been in savage Africa, better even than serfs of ancient or mediaeval times. It was different in the newer South, where large plantations were planted to cotton, sugar, or rice, where slaves were owned by the thousand and were worked under the superintendence of hired overseers. Slaves from the border states were sold off the estates to the Southern planters, families were frequently broken up and new connections made without the bother of legal ceremony; whites and negroes debauched each other with their vices. These were almost inevitable consequences of racial subordination and economic exploitation, and they created an evil that became intolerable.

Rarely has the South been given credit for Christianizing and civilizing the negro. Brought out of African slavery, planted in a new environment, without schools or moral training, the man of color might have ruined the South. Instead he became the means of its agricultural prosperity, and in return master and mistress made him into a civilized being. He had his own home life in a cabin on the plantation; he received a practical manual training in house, stable and field; in spite of his ignorance and superstition he was taught the rudiments of the Christian religion, usually after the Baptist or Methodist fashion. The negroes revelled in the enjoyment of emotional piety. Unfortunately religion did not chasten their moral nature, and they were lacking in self-control. At best the slave system was a social order that did not belong to the nineteenth century, and

even the Southern landholders whose property was dependent for its value on slavery did not attempt for some time to defend it on principle. Men like Jefferson and Madison now and then proposed its abolition, but the plan did not seem feasible.

American slavery was for a long time solely an economic affair. The conscience of the people hardly stirred until humanitarianism began to exert its influence. The denominational bodies were the first to protest strongly against the system. The Quakers spoke against it as early as 1688, and later on excluded any of their members who engaged in it. In the revolutionary period Samuel Hopkins, the Newport theologian, took strong ground against a trade that flourished in his own port, and his Congregationalist church voted that no slaveholder should keep his membership in the local organization. Individuals among the Presbyterians maintained a similar advanced position. The younger Edwards preached a sermon against the slave trade before the Connecticut Abolition Society, which was printed and circulated widely North and South. In 1774 the first abolition society was organized by the Pennsylvania Quakers, an example followed by the Friends in England nine years later. Other societies were organized along the coast north of Virginia.

No body of Christians has done so much for their fellows in social and moral reform in proportion to their numbers as have the Friends, or Quakers. They were the first to recognize the right of the slave to his freedom and to free those whom they held. Sometimes they bought slaves to set them free, or to make it possible to work out their freedom. They would not even hire slave labor, and were known to boycott the products of such labor. They encouraged the religious interest of the slaves, and helped some of them to educate themselves. Later they assisted slaves to escape, but confined their efforts to peaceful measures, and never countenanced the political move-

ment for abolition or the resort to arms. Whittier, the Quaker poet, won deserved fame for his songs of freedom.

Methodists and Baptists both put themselves on record against slavery, and this is the more remarkable as both denominations were strong in the South. After the Revolution the Methodist Conference declared slavery to be contrary to all law and conscience, and harmful to human society. Southern Baptists a few years later resolved that slavery was inconsistent with republican government and the rights of nature, and recommended the extirpation of the "horrid evil" by every possible legal means.

The prospect of gradual abolition vanished after the invention of the cotton gin. By 1818 the Presbyterian church, representing all parts of the country, was moved to express itself forcibly against the slave institution, denouncing it as unwarranted by nature or the law of God, and as inconsistent with Christianity, as leading to moral weakness and irresponsibility, and at best as being a violation of the natural rights of freedom. Furthermore the Assembly declared it to be the duty of Christians "to use their honest, earnest and unwearied endeavors to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible throughout the world."

This action was taken because it was apparent that the slave system was becoming aggressive. New slave territory was being opened in the South along the Gulf. The country north of the Ohio was being settled by Southerners first of all, but it was generally admitted that it would not be worth while to try to introduce slavery there, though Baptist and Methodist ministers once nipped such a conspiracy in the bud. The serious question was whether slavery would be restricted to the southern country east of the Mississippi River, or whether the system would reach out for new cotton fields in the farther West. It was becoming apparent that the slaveholders would not be

contented with what they possessed already. They wanted a share in the exploitation of the boundless acres that stretched away to the horizon, and they wanted to keep the balance of power in the national Government. It was with this in mind that the Presbyterian Assembly uttered its strong protest.

The discussion over the admission of Missouri to the Union, followed, ending in compromise. During the thirties political agitation was concerned with other matters. Partisan politics were absorbing and economic interests demanded attention, especially before and after the panic of 1837. But interest in the slave issue was not slumbering; individual agitators like William Lloyd Garrison were crying out hoarsely for abolition and nothing but abolition; the churches were considering seriously their obligations. The conviction grew among the churches that the slave issue must not be dodged. More and more were Northern people convinced that slaveholding was wrong, but how to deal with it was a delicate and perplexing question. As Christian churches at present are becoming more convinced that there are social evils to be eradicated, and that the churches ought to take a firmer stand against every form of wrong, but hesitate over the method, so it was with reference to the towering evil of that time. But a changing sentiment was coming over the South. When Northern Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians urged their Southern friends to emancipate their servants and threatened them with discipline for persistence in their course, the Southerners who regarded themselves as equally good Christians as were the complainants justified themselves by appealing to the example of the Old Testament worthies. Such an argument was forceful among those who regarded all parts of the Bible as equally inspired for the guidance of human conduct. The Southern attitude troubled those who wanted peace at all costs, yet whose consciences were not easy.



Midway in the next decade both the Methodist and the Baptist churches North and South broke apart over questions relating to slavery. It was an omen of evil days to come. No definite policy seemed possible among the Methodists. An attempt to quell the turbulent abolitionists in the church resulted in a secession of the fiercest of them. An attempt to deal kindly but conscientiously with Southern members led to an agreement by which a separation was effected, and in 1845 the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was fully organized. In the same year the Southern Baptists reorganized. This was due to the precipitate action of the Alabama State Convention demanding a statement that no discrimination would be made against slaveholders in appointments of missionaries and officers on denominational boards. The general denominational body was thus forced to take a stand for principle, and the Foreign Missionary Society replied to the demand that it could not in any way give the seal of its approval to slavery. This incident forced the two sections apart, and resulted in the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention, which undertook its own foreign and home mission and publication and educational obligations. Before the Civil War the Presbyterians suffered similar schism, and during the conflict the Episcopalians of North and South enjoyed neither fellowship nor coöperation. At the close of the war the Episcopal organization was able to unify both sections by ignoring the temporary separation, but the more independent bodies that had separated earlier found it impossible to reunite.

As the conflict thickened various incidents showed the attitude of uncompromising church people. When the attempt was made by Southern sympathizers to secure control of Kansas, hundreds of ministers signed a moral protest and sent it to Congress. Harriet Beecher Stowe, wife of a theological professor, thrilled the North and enraged the South with her story of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Ministers in the South ardently defended the cause for which that section of the country was contending. It was exceedingly difficult for people in the free states to understand how Christian people of the South could justify slavery. There can be no question that the Southern people were religious; they have been probably the most religious portion of the nation. But their religion did not require them to give up an institution that seemed to them to be much better than freedom for the negro in spite of abuses in certain quarters. No one can read the sermons of Southern divines without believing that it was the honest conviction of church men and women that they were commissioned of God to rule a subject race as were the Hebrews in the land of Canaan. Ministers prayed as confidently as in the North for the blessing of the Lord of Hosts on those who fought for the Cause, and when it was apparent that it was a lost Cause because their resources were exhausted, they believed none the less in its justice.

Nor was the Northern conscience universally troubled about slavery. When the war came it was supported for the defense of the Union rather than for the emancipation of the slave. The churches helped to organize Christian and Sanitary Commissions to aid in preserving the health and morals of the soldiers. Ministers volunteered as chaplains in field and hospital to bring cheer and consolation, as they did on the other side of the line. The moral conviction of the North clarified itself as the war went on. The people generally supported the Emancipation Proclamation of the President as not only a justifiable war measure but a moral necessity too. After the war they insisted on the civil rights of the negro, and promptly founded schools for his improvement. But it is reasonable to believe that most of this happened as a consequence of war fervor. The emancipation of the slave would have been a much slower process had the war not come, for the conscience of the people was only

slowly becoming sensitive enough to carry through so gigantic a reform. The excitement of the war carried the reform farther than conditions warranted, and the negro became a persistent problem for the whole nation, not alone of the South. In church circles the war produced divisions that many decades could not heal.

## VII. THE RELIGIOUS MIND IN THE MAKING

THE period between the Revolution and the Civil War is marked by a definite growth in the religious consciousness of the American people. In spite of the Puritan ancestry of many, relatively few persons belonged to the churches, not more than one out of twenty-five at the outbreak of the war against Great Britain. People in general were indifferent in their attitude towards religion. They were concerned with the practical things of agriculture and business and politics. They were bringing broad acres under cultivation, rearing large families, leaving both in order to fight during the war, and afterwards sharing in the experimental task of building a nation.

The evangelistic activities at the turn of the century and subsequently brought many more persons into the churches. Between 1800 and 1850 the number of church members increased from 365,000 to 3,530,000, a gain of one thousand per cent. Such an increment invigorated the churches, and had the effect of extending their influence in the local communities. The simple routine of the eighteenth century churches did not require much activity from the laity, but the new recruits had a keener sense of religious obligation. The obligation to propagate the gospel encouraged evangelism at home and missions abroad. The obligation to give religious training to children resulted in the organization of the Sunday School. The obligation to relieve human suffering produced philanthropic and reform organizations. When Sunday schools were organized, superintendents and teachers were needed; when the churches kindled with an interest

in missions, women's local missionary societies came into existence, and out of their small resources earnest women made generous contributions. Philanthropic enterprises enlisted those who were sensitive to human misfortunes. Religion proved to be a larger concept than it had been traditionally. The church, like the nation, grew in territory, expanded its interests and obligations, and came to understand its values more clearly in the century between 1765 and 1865.

Yet, while the religious mind broadened in the conception of its task, it was slow to change the content of its code. Like other social institutions, the church was the creature of tradition and custom. Its forms of organization and worship, its ordinances or sacraments, its doctrines and creeds, had the sanction of a religious mind that was trained from early childhood to believe in their validity. Religious belief found authority for them in the divine will. Even in the atmosphere of revolt against custom and tradition that characterized the Revolutionary period, a revolt which with some persons involved a loss of faith in religion altogether, the church mind seemed not to change. Not that modifications did not take place from time to time. More or less unconsciously the mind was in process of development.

Two conflicting forces were at issue in the religious mind from the beginning of American history—the obligation to think and act in obedience to certain principles that had been inherited from the past, and freedom under the new colonial conditions to change the code. The sense of religious obligation had sent the Puritan on migration rather than give up his cherished principles, but the impulse to freedom made him organize his churches after a new pattern, and to work himself free from the State control of religion. The belief in the excellence of Calvinism made Jonathan Edwards its champion, but the impulse to break over homiletic barriers made him a revivalist. On the other hand, his opponent, Charles



Chauncy, held to the orderly methods of religious profession, but repudiated the rigorous creed of the orthodox churches. But the rank and file of church people believed and practiced according to custom.

The most important part of the church code was its system of theological thought. Both organization and activity rested on certain cherished ideas. These ideas had been wrought into a coherent system of belief by the theologians of the Reformation. Many of these ideas were survivals of mediæval Catholicism, but Protestantism had personalized religion in removing the priest from his position as a necessary intermediary between man and God, and had stressed the attitude of heart towards God as more important than any act of merit. The theology of most church people had as its cardinal doctrine a belief in an absolute, unchanging God, perfect in his attributes, holy, just, and good. Transcendent in majesty and enthroned in the heavens, he made the earth his footstool and stooped to hear the petitions of his subjects, domiciled there by his creative act. The human race was tangled in a net of evil through the fall of the first man from the place of honor and opportunity for which he had been designed. The only means of salvation from sin was personal faith in God's grace as revealed and made dynamic through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, and sanctification by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who with the Father and the Son constituted the divine Trinity. Since in Adam the race had sinned against him, God was under no obligation to save its members from the consequences of their sin, but his gracious mercy chose to save a few through the merits of the blood of Jesus, which cleansed them from their sin, and made atonement for them with an outraged God. Those who were not thus cleansed were doomed after a day of judgment to suffer eternal punishment in a hell of torment.

The religious attitude towards mundane things was

critical and inclined to asceticism. Material things and the desires of the carnal mind were deceitful to the soul. The Christian must deny himself pleasures that might lead his feet to stray from the straight and narrow path that was marked out by the Bible, his infallible guide. By prayer and occasional fasting he should discipline his froward heart to seek good rather than evil. Church worship was expected of him regularly, and it was his duty to participate in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, though they had no regenerating power, except to sacramentalists like Catholics and High Church Episcopalians. The church was a bond of Christian fellowship and an ark of safety. It was its task to rescue as many sinners as possible from an evil world that was doomed to destruction, to convert them to personal faith and hope in Christ as their Savior, and to cultivate in them a Christian character that would stand against the assaults of temptation and assure them an entrance at death into the land of the blessed where they would abide in eternal happiness and blissful ease.

Beyond these conceptions the religious mind of most Americans had not gone. This was the theology that was preached in revivals, taught in Sunday schools, explained by missionaries, discussed in conference and assembly. Different denominations and parties within them differed in minor details, small groups, like the Freewill Baptists denied Calvinistic determinism, or like the Unitarians denied the Trinity, or like the Universalists denied future punishment, but the large majority of church people were orthodox.

The perpetuation of orthodox religion in America required instruments of education. These might be schools and colleges, books and periodicals and above all else Bibles, and sermons that would be at the same time explanatory and persuasive. Influences must be brought to bear upon children in the formative stage of their minds; hence the publication and tract societies.

In the sparsely settled American country education was not easy. Ever since the original settlers had left England it had been difficult to give attention to education of any sort. Even in the mother country only a few had enjoyed the benefit of schooling. The religious instruction of the children was not forgotten in the homes of the conscientious Puritans, and elementary and grammar schools were a part of the social furniture of New England in the larger towns. The Bible and the New England Primer with its moral exhibits were school books, and religious and moral instruction was possible under public auspices for a people homogeneous in race and religion. But schools were not free for all everywhere as later, and even in the better parts of New England the support of the schools became half-hearted; when the drift of irreligion and the introduction of new textbooks weakened the place of the Bible and the Primer, and denominational bodies found it impossible to agree as to what sort of religion should be taught, religious teaching was eliminated from most of the schools. Outside of New England public schools were uncommon, and only the children of the well-to-do found room in private schools.

Two considerations were weighty in creating an interest in the extension of education, besides the obvious advantage of literacy in making a living. One was religious. A religion in which reading the Bible and listening to sermons played so large a part required intelligence on the part of laymen and training for the clergy. The other was political. As the nation grew democratic, it became necessary that the people should be acquainted with public questions, and should be able to understand and join in political discussions. The progress of education was most popular wherever the New England influence spread; in the Middle West schools sprang up through that influence more rapidly than could have been expected. Ministers were frequently school teachers, and their influence was on the side of education in the older

sections of the country. For boys and girls the academy was adopted from England. Usually under church auspices, this grade of school provided an education that would fit them for intelligent citizenship and Christian living. Supported by private benefaction, sometimes with public assistance, the academy became the main reliance of the people for education where the grammar school had not flourished and the high school had not yet come into existence. Eight colleges were founded before the Revolution, and a hundred more were added within the next sixty years. They were of little higher grade than the nineteenth century academies; boys finished their courses of study by the time they had reached their middle teens. Colleges like Harvard and Yale, Princeton and Columbia, Brown and Dartmouth, were founded primarily for ministerial education, and for a time they made the study of divinity the central item in the curriculum. Teachers and administrators were usually ministers, and in denominational colleges it was required that they must be orthodox in the faith. The defection of the Faculty at Yale from Congregationalism to Episcopacy required a change in administration in the early years of the college. The election of Ware to a professorship of divinity at Harvard a century later meant that that college had been definitely lost to Unitarianism by the Congregationalists.

As population increased colleges multiplied and grew in size and in resources. As they became less conspicuously training schools for the ministry, their curriculum broadened and theological education was relegated to professional schools. For freer instruction State universities were created. They threw open their doors without expense for tuition on the principle that education was for the training of citizenship, and presently women as well as men were taking advantage of an educational opportunity that was free from denominational handicaps and that offered a broader course of instruction than did the denominational schools. Until normal schools were de-

vised the academies and colleges provided the training for public school teachers. Before many years had passed the State universities of the South and the Middle West were becoming so popular and strong in resources as to threaten the very existence of the denominational colleges. But the churches depended on the colleges to train their ministers, and were willing to pay for the support of the schools in order that their young people might be educated in a religious atmosphere. Thus the small college could depend on an ecclesiastical constituency, but its policy was determined by the church mind, which was not cordial to new tendencies in education. Though with narrow vision, the distinctively Christian schools rendered a real service to the nation in the recruiting and training of thousands of religious leaders, both ministerial and lay.

The first Protestant theological seminary to be opened for the training of ministers was under the shadow of the Phillips Academy at Andover, Massachusetts, in 1808. When colleges were few, and not easily accessible, prominent ministers had admitted theological students into their homes and had shared with them their experience and given them clinical training. Men of the schools had greater prestige among the churches as well as ability, and when the demand warranted colleges sprang up in every section. But the professional school seemed advisable for several reasons. The Catholics had established a seminary at Baltimore for the training of priests as early as 1791. The New Light Presbyterians had organized their Log College in Pennsylvania for the special purpose of training evangelists. The most powerful motive in the founding of Andover Seminary was to preserve orthodoxy after the Unitarians had captured Harvard College. Other denominations promptly followed the example of the Congregationalists, providing the professional education which was no longer the principal part of the college curriculum. The theological schools were important in maintaining the standard of an educated ministry, but like the colleges



many of them were of inferior quality. Like all professional schools they were conservative in ideas, and by segregating their students apart from the active currents of society they did not fit them altogether well for a productive ministry. It is only in recent years that theological schools have become progressive in their ideas, modern in their outlook, broader and richer and more practical in their curricula.

Other instruments besides the schools helped to make the religious mind of America. The renewed energy that came with the awakened interest in religion, so general about 1800, and that produced the missionary movements abroad and on the western frontier, resulted in the organization of a variety of associations, many of them of an educational nature. Some of them were accessory to organized missions, like Bible and tract societies, others were humanitarian like the Seamen's Friend Society, one was for the distinct purpose of encouraging evangelism and religious instruction, the American Sunday School Union.

Bible and tract societies were organized for the distribution of religious literature, especially in that part of the country where religious privileges were enjoyed intermittently. It was not sufficient to send preachers out on religious propaganda. They were not numerous enough to go around. On the frontier they were couriers of a day, voicing their message and disappearing over the horizon. Then, too, most of them were ignorant, except for their grasp upon the rudiments of religion, and they were liable to become religious quacks. Backwoodsmen might put up with patent nostrums for a while, and small groups of followers devote themselves with a zeal worthy of a better cause to such strange cults as those of the Millerites, the Shakers and the Mormons, but a healthy growth of religion required the assent of the mind as well as of the heart. Colporteurs, therefore, were employed by the new societies to follow the preachers to the West, and persua-

sively to distribute religious literature that would make the people think.

The general societies were followed, sometimes preceded, by denominational publishing houses. The Methodist Book Concern was the earliest of them. It developed out of a private enterprise for disseminating the writings of John Wesley, and was adopted officially by the denomination. Others were local experiments, but soon extended to the bounds of the denominations. Pamphlet literature was circulated in the interest of denominational tenets, and books were issued when the finances permitted. Most of the publishing houses found their principal work in supplying literature for the Sunday schools that were coming into existence in increasing numbers.

The chief instrument for the education of democracy has been the newspaper and the magazine. The periodical visit of the printed sheet exerted cumulative force upon the minds of its readers, and proved a most effective means for the propagation of specific ideas, political, philosophical or religious. In religious circles the missionary enterprise created a demand for news sheets. New England was issuing state magazines under denominational imprint early in the nineteenth century, giving the news of English foreign missions as well as of American interests, and stimulating the American mind to respond to the missionary idea by the organization of American societies. Within a few years denominational newspapers were in the field. Naturally most of this literary activity was in the East, but as many as eighteen papers are said to have been published west of the mountains in 1832. Certain ambitious scholars attempted the publication of monthly or quarterly religious reviews, with articles that appealed especially to scholars and cultivated people, but such magazines were not popular enough to keep them in circulation. The influence of the religious press was not liberalizing theologically, but it kept alive an interest in the denomination and its enterprises, and it provided spiritual nour-

ishment to some who otherwise would have gone hungry. The expansion of religious ideas was to come through the freer instruction of the schools and the influence of an unsectarian press.

For the religious instruction of the young a more definite method was needed than the religious press could supply. The religious school with its definite schedules and its concentrated study under the personal guidance of a teacher was the only solution. When religion was crowded out of the public schools in the East, a Sunday school was the logical result. Starting as a philanthropic enterprise in England for the instruction of street gamins, the Sunday school became in America an organized auxiliary of the church for the religious instruction of the children of church families. Local church initiative was followed by more general societies.

The earliest Bible study was almost entirely a matter of memorizing Scripture, but a new method was introduced by which a selection of verses was made and printed with questions on the text. Question books were used in the classes by the teachers; the pupils were expected to gather their information from the Bible. B. F. Jacobs and J. H. Vincent, the founder of the Chautauqua Summer Assembly, improved the weekly methods of instruction. About 1870 a uniform system of weekly lessons was adopted by the various denominational publishing houses, and denominational newspapers printed comments on the lesson. This uniform system extended internationally, and worked so well that there was little agitation for its improvement for twenty years. But the same lessons were not adapted to all ages and all kinds of qualifications of the human mind. As secular scholarship improved, the Sunday schools found it pushing religious education to higher standards, and as religious scholarship became more discriminating it was seen that the uniform system and the usual order of study helps needed modification. The normal training of teachers was begun. Materials for

study improved. Local schools tried experiments of their own, some of which became adopted widely. Eventually the leading denominations found it advisable to appoint commissions to examine into the whole subject of religious education, and to appoint experts in religious education as directors of the subject in state and local organizations.

They were stimulated to better teaching and administration by the Religious Education Association, which was organized in 1903, and was composed mainly of educators and ministers who were urgent for more rapid improvement. By investigation and publication of reports the organization made a worthy contribution to educational progress, and the whole subject took on greater dignity than it had had from the indifferent quality of most Sunday school work.

Tentative as were the efforts of religious people to broaden their activities, the mere effort was evidence of consciences sensitized to human needs. In a period when the personal side of religion was emphasized, the will was stimulated to undertake enterprises that had important social consequences. The belief that all persons were of equal value to God, and that it was a human obligation to raise depressed individuals or races to a higher level of religious faith and ideals, together with the extension of education, helped to produce the sturdy democracy that vaulted to political power in the days of Andrew Jackson.

The period after the second war with Great Britain was especially productive of real social progress. The nation, coming to realize more fully its independence from European affairs, yielded itself to the processes of growth. Gaining rapidly in population, expanding in territory, diversifying its occupations, tending swiftly towards democracy, it had a new sense of power. At the same time the mind of the people was being enriched. Literature and art were beginning to flourish. Public libraries were founded and museums opened. The inventions that were to revolutionize popular habits and methods of industry

were producing railroads and steamboats, and presently the sewing machine, agricultural machinery, and the electric telegraph. The heart and conscience of the people were kindling in response to the need of the unfortunate and the oppressed. Under such stimulus the religious mind became more active. The temper of public discourse softened, the humanitarian note was emphasized, and God himself seemed to become more kindly. In certain scholarly circles criticism of the old theological system was at work, even upon the Bible, and there was less disposition to regard all the traditional dogmas as infallible.

In spite of all the efforts that were made for the expansion and enrichment of religion, ignorance and prejudice closed the minds of a great many people. In the Southwest, where the crude methods of the revivalists had their greatest vogue, prejudice was strong against new-fangled notions. It was there that sympathizers with untrained exhorters organized their own Cumberland Presbytery and ordained men without the usual educational qualifications. There, too, were the Primitive Baptists who opposed seminaries, Sunday schools, and missions on the theory that God needed none of these to convince men of sin and to convert them to the way of salvation. It was long before that section of the country fell into line and organized its own training institutions.

During the same period unbalanced religionists were winning groups of followers in allegiance to certain obsessions. A Vermont farmer named Miller wrote and preached the second advent of Christ at a certain date, excitable people sold their property and watched with tense expectancy for the approaching day and hour. When they were disappointed some lost their faith altogether, and worldly scorn of the Millerites was inherited by all active exponents of the doctrine of the Second Advent.

An English woman, Ann Lee, came to America and taught that the millennium had begun already and that



Christ had appeared the second time in her, that marriage was forbidden, and that all property must be held in common. From New York state as a center her propaganda extended, and communistic settlements of Shakers with men and women occupying separate houses were started in a number of places from Maine to Ohio. Their abrogation of marriage and failure to keep their hold on the children of their proselytes made decline inevitable, until they are nearly extinct. Numerous communistic experiments were made, mostly by German sectarians. Some of them succeeded for a time, but eventually failed through mismanagement, dissension, fanaticism or maladjustment to economic and social environment.

Most of such teachings and experiments as these were, due to supposed revelations that had come to individuals. The belief in spiritual revelation was capitalized by certain persons who had unusual insight into the credulity of the human mind, if not an abnormal second sight. The Fox sisters introduced the vogue of Spiritualism when by rappings and other exciting phenomena they claimed that departed spirits were trying to communicate with those who were ready to accept their messages. The uncertainty of the possibility of such communication and the natural love of the occult strengthened the longing of bereaved or curious persons to find out more about the spiritual world, and Spiritualism for these reasons gained a permanent place among the religious cults of America.

Of a higher order were the claims of Emmanuel Swedenborg to a special understanding of the other world. He was no necromancer, but a scientist of brilliant mind and reputation. So convinced was he of certain special revelations that he published his experiences to the world, and in England and America as well as in his native Sweden he found numbers of believers. The Church of the New Jerusalem, however, never gained many converts.

Of all the prophets of a special revelation who have found opportunity for propaganda in tolerant America

the Mormons have gained the greatest repute. American in origin, Mormonism has made many converts in Europe. Shrewd in finance, it has been able to assist immigrants to American headquarters. Playing upon the religious credulity of its adherents, it was able to foist polygamy upon them as a part of a revealed ecclesiastical and social system. Driven out of the Mississippi valley to an unpromising wilderness, it has been so economically successful as to grow fat on the land and to make the desert blossom as the rose. In spite of the frown of public opinion and the opposition of the national Government to its practices it has spread into the mountain states of the West and has sent its representatives to Washington to sit in the deliberations of the national assemblies. By colonization and missionary efforts Mormonism makes its way, sometimes by its religious appeal, at other times by the material advantages that are promised to believers. As an immoral propaganda it has been condemned by the social mind of America; as an alien religion based on a fraud it has been hated by the churches; as an ambitious state within a state it has been feared by patriots. In spite of opposition it has prospered, and in its section of the country it has filled a larger place than any other institution, political, social, or religious.

Protestantism has had a similar fear of the political power of the Catholic hierarchy, and of the ecclesiastical system that has been modified but not changed in principle from that of mediæval Europe. With the religious antagonisms that were consequences of the Protestant Reformation in Europe firmly fixed in the minds of colonial Americans, it was natural that the Protestant colonies should be unfriendly to Catholic settlement. Maryland was the only colony where they found special opportunity, and before long the control of that colony passed to others. The acquisition of Louisiana added to the small Catholic population of the United States, but Louisiana was remote and had no influence upon the religion of the nation.

After the American colonies acquired their independence the small number of Catholics were encouraged by the appointment of a Marylander of good family, John Carroll, as prefect apostolic of the church in America (1784), and subsequently as bishop. The natural conflict between the authority of the hierarchy and the American desire for democracy in the local church appeared intermittently in the issue of trusteeism. The laity wished to keep the church buildings in the hands of their own representatives, and to choose and dismiss their own pastors. Breaking out locally from time to time the issue continued to vex the church, but the American spirit was not strong enough to change the old system.

The Catholics suffered at times from an outbreak of religious fanaticism, as when the Ursuline convent was burned near Boston in 1834, and riots occurred in Philadelphia ten years later. Protestant suspicion showed itself in the Know Nothing movement of the mid-century and later in the A.P.A. Whenever the church resorted to un-American practices, as in the opening of parochial schools or a suggestion that they should have a share of public school funds, lynx-eyed guardians of the ark tried to prevent unholy hands from touching it.

Catholics had their internal bickerings between rival orders and the priesthood, and between nationalities. Difficulties thickened with the incoming of immigrant millions, though their coming brought a large accession of numbers to the churches. The Irish, coming in swarms in the forties, were loyal children of the church, and from Irish-American stock the church recruited large numbers of its clergy. The German migration that followed brought many Catholics, but the Scandinavians who came next were faithfully Lutheran. National differences were felt most keenly in later decades when the French Canadians poured into the industrial cities of the northern border states, and Poles and Italians came in tidal waves from Europe. The census made it possible for Catholics

to point with pride to the rapid gain in numbers, even though there were large losses through the indifference of many immigrants who were glad to slough off all religious restraint. The great influx of Europeans tested severely the resources of the church in America, but the organization set itself valiantly to meet the test, and in the fast growing cities Catholic institutions became prominent. In rural sections Catholics were few in number until well into the twentieth century, and small provision was made for their needs.

It is much to the credit of the Catholic church in America that it has been able to keep its moral control over so many millions who naturally responded to the spirit of freedom that so permeates this country. Without such moral restraint in the period of transition from the old to the new millions lost their faith and not a few their moral balance; the church aided the others to keep their footing. But the Catholic church suffers continually from its lack of kinship with the spirit of freedom and democracy. Its genius is European, not American. Even with the training of the parochial schools many young people find themselves out of sympathy with the ancient order of organization, if not of ritual worship. This has been a severe handicap to the Roman Catholic church, as it is likely to be to the Greek church as well. As regards the relations of Catholic and Protestant, there is less of bigotry but no less of a sense of radical difference between them, and time seems unable to bring them into harmony, and only occasionally into coöperation for social ends.

Although the religion of the American people has been nominally Christian, others have shared in the activities and responsibilities of American life. Jews were among the colonists, and wherever they became numerous enough synagogues were established and their religious practices observed. Most of the religious leaders came from abroad, because it was not until 1875 that Jewish educational institutions were established successfully. The bond

among the congregations was not strong, and it was easy for some of them to depart radically from the ancient standards and to organize a reform movement that culminated in the Society for Ethical Culture. The Jews eventually organized their Young Men's Hebrew Associations on the model of the Christian Associations, and a Chautauqua Society which functioned as a college extension movement. The Jews have been conspicuous for their philanthropies, particularly among the needy immigrants of their own race.

The increasing influx of Jews and Catholics from Europe diversified religion in America, and diverging tendencies in Protestant communions tended in the same direction. In a country of free thinking like America it was inevitable that conflicting opinions should arise inside the denominations, and occasionally a section drop off, as an iceberg breaks from its parent glacier. Such was the division between Old and New School Presbyterians which occurred in 1837 and persisted until after the Civil War. The Old School constituents maintained the conservative theology that was held most rigidly by those of Scottish ancestry. Failing to discipline more liberal minds in the denomination, a majority in the General Assembly voted to disfellowship more than five hundred churches with one hundred thousand members. Naturally the victims united in defense of their position, and a controversy ensued inside the Presbyterian family that weakened its position in the country at large and contributed nothing to the development of the denomination. The Civil War minimized theological differences in the presence of militant politics, and parties coalesced among the Presbyterians north of Mason and Dixon's line.

Congregationalists were debating theological problems during the same period, though they had lost their most liberal members in the Unitarian defection. No denomination could escape altogether the growing tendency to liberalism in theology, and Congregationalists were more



open-minded than most Christians. The New England theology was still strong, and the strictly orthodox party organized a new seminary in Connecticut to counteract the teaching of a modified Calvinism at Yale. The flexibility of organization kept the denomination from such schisms as among the Presbyterians. Baptists and Methodists, who were divided by the issue over slavery, suffered little from internal doctrinal differences, but Baptists and non-Baptists waged a wordy warfare on the subject of baptism. Episcopalians were vexed by party differences between High and Low Church adherents, and a few impatient radicals withdrew and organized the Reformed Episcopal Church in 1873.

In general the period between 1830 and 1880 was marked by a liberalizing tendency in the church mind, as it felt the influence of the currents of contemporary thought, but in underlying convictions and in denominational alignment the American people maintained with remarkable fidelity their European heritage. Progress was most marked in the territorial expansion of Christianity both in America and in pagan countries, and in the successful operation of the principle of voluntarism in the great missionary enterprises and in the maintenance of local churches everywhere in America. Outside of the Catholic church, where all attempts at lay control had been baffled, the members of the churches enjoyed democratic direction of their affairs and in the enjoyment of self-government the more willingly contributed to church support. As in the nation at large, those were years of increasing gain to the churches, but less in intellectual virility than in social and institutional access of power.

## VIII. RATIONALIZING RELIGION

MID-VICTORIAN religion in America, as represented by the bulk of the Protestant churches, was still soundly orthodox in its faithfulness to the theology of the Reformation. Except for a few scholars among the clergy, church people were not aware that a revolution in thought was going on which would affect profoundly the conclusions of that theology and would alter the outlook of Christian people upon history and the Bible, nature and society, the universe and God. The chief interest of evangelical preachers and ecclesiastically active lay leaders was in the problem of interesting people in personal religion and so bringing them into voluntary affiliation with the church. Thus at the same time they might save souls and build up the church.

American religion tended to be practical rather than intellectual like the other interests of the time. That was the temptation of the churches. They measured their success by their income in contributions received and members added, in the number of new churches and Sunday schools, and in the increase in average attendance upon their services. Even ministers were appraised according to their achievements in these respects rather than in the less tangible results of spiritual purpose and energy that had been generated. This pragmatic emphasis discounted theological thinking. Whether because of a distaste for hard thinking, or because other interests weighed more in the social mind, it became impossible to arouse most people to consider seriously the merits of any wrought out system of thought, like the New England theology. Religious people took unhesitatingly what the Reforma-

tion handed down, if only it had the Protestant stamp, whether it was the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, the Augustinian theory of man's fall and its consequences, Dante's dire fancies regarding hell, or Calvin's insistence on the absolute sovereignty of God.

The attitude towards life on this planet was not a hopeful one. The present world was destined to destruction that might arrive over night. The Christian's treasure was laid up for him in another world toward which his thoughts turned, at least on Sundays. Sunday was to be kept as a holy day, free from desecration; to this end Sunday legislation was passed and efforts were made to enforce the law. During the secular days of the week it was permissible to yield to the instinct of acquisitiveness, and by working hard to accumulate a competency to keep one from the poorhouse, where few but the half-wits had to go. America offered an unparalleled opportunity to everybody to make good in the business of the material, and it was convenient to believe that God would not begrudge any man material success, if only he attended to the business of the spiritual on Sunday. This philosophy was not put so naïvely, but the theory was tacitly held.

The energy that was applied on weekdays to secular interests was not remitted on Sunday in religious duties. Americans of the nineteenth century were on the whole a churchgoing people, at least in the older sections of the country. In most cases the habit had been ingrained by pious ancestors. Everywhere the element of sociability entered in to draw people to the meeting-house. Two, even three scheduled services of worship, besides the Sunday school session, were in vogue in New England, and many persons felt an obligation to attend them all. The old Puritan rigor, which required families to remain at home quietly in the intervals between meetings, and expected even children to spend their time in religious reading, was relaxed, even in New England, but conservative parents were cautious in their grants of liberty.

The disposition to distinguish sharply between the sacred and the secular tended to divorce religion from every-day life, and to put the lives of people into separate compartments. In mediæval Europe religion was an intimate part of routine life. Superstitious though much of religion was, it was not shoved aside into one day. Theoretically the religious American carried his religion into life. Conscientiously he conducted family prayers, cultivated the virtues of private life, refrained from such vices as lying, profanity, gambling and unchastity. He fully believed that religion should fruit in righteous living, but he interpreted both narrowly. He had not learned to apply religion to every situation as a necessary part of it, as something that had to do, for example, with raising better wheat, as well as refraining from swearing at the horses that did the plowing or the men who harvested the crop. Religion was not a constructive factor in occupation and achievement. From the point of view of the liberal critic religion needed to be less of an ecclesiastical system and more of an attitude towards life, less of a cult and more of a culture of the whole personality. It needed to be rationalized, that minds might think through their religious problems without the bondage to tradition and relate themselves to the universe that was unfolding before the eyes of the scientist in an amazing way. It needed to be socialized, so that men would see that philanthropy and missions were not an equivalent for a religion that should permeate business, industry, education, recreation, and all the permanent social relations that human beings sustain in present life. It needed to be spiritualized so that men would feel the presence of the Divine in every-day life and in all life so keenly that, if a man were religious at all, he would work to do the divine will and rejoice, not fear, in the consciousness of that Presence.

The development of such rationalization, socialization, and spiritualization was in process in the decades that

followed the Civil War. The intellectual movement came first.

The new era of religious thinking was the product of forces that were vigorously at work tearing down structures in every department of thought and building new ones. Religion could not be kept in a compartment of its own, unaffected by the conclusions that were being reached in other fields of study. Religion was to pass through the rationalizing process. Here in America as elsewhere religion had been mainly a product of feeling. Fears were aroused or feelings enlisted, and the individual gave willing response to the impulse that moved him. The revivalist relied on the emotional appeal. For the rest a man acquired a traditional belief from childhood, which remained constant in most cases. The man of the street and the pew accepted contentedly the literal word of the Bible or the interpretation of his church as sufficient authority for him. Only the exceptional man philosophizes or ventures out upon the sea of phenomena in an effort to add to scientific knowledge. Yet, when new ideas are thrusting themselves upon public attention through the school and the press, even orthodox people cannot escape contagion. That was the situation in the nineties, when the conclusions of the nineteenth century thought filtered through to the rank and file of thoughtful church people.

Religious thinking among scholars had been in process of change ever since the Reformation, though the layman had not been aware of it. As there was a line of descent of orthodox theology from Calvin and Luther, so there was a line of descent of liberal theology from the rationalists of the Reformation.

Among the experimental forms pushed out in the process of Protestant thought was one that stressed the ability of man to use his reason in religion. This was Socinianism. Socinus was an Italian, brought up in the stronghold of humanism, and he carried humanistic ideas in religion to Poland, where he attracted to himself the free-thinking



element among Protestants. He was a pioneer of that modernism in religion which denies the depravity and worthlessness of man, and defends his dignity and rights before God and his ability to approach God and to interpret his will. Socinians believed in a God who did not need to be propitiated, but was just towards man, and rejected the idea that Christ made a substitutionary atonement, by which alone human beings could be saved. This carried with it a denial of the Trinity, a denial that provoked the hostility of other Protestant sects.

The Socinian sap coursed nevertheless through the stem of European religious thought. It produced a humanistic growth in Holland, which branched out as Arminianism, a protest against the extreme Calvinism of the Swiss and Dutch, but not so radical as Socinianism. It spread to England where it produced a number of varieties of humanistic thinking, such as Arminianism, Arianism and Deism. The connecting thought that runs through them all is the worth of man and his moral and intellectual power to find out God. In its extreme radicalism it passed from Deism into Atheism; in its milder form it united with the evangelicalism of the General Baptists and the Methodists. In its normal development it produced Unitarianism.

Unitarianism appeared in both old and New England in the eighteenth century. It was inevitable that the stern, rigid system of Calvinistic theology should produce a reaction. Certain thinkers could not believe that man was a helpless creature, crushed like a worm under the heel of an angry God. They could not believe that every man must approach God like a cringing criminal, only to be admitted to his presence by an Advocate who could mollify the divine wrath. Man was worth something to God. God had made him, and he had his rights in relation to God. Doctrines like these, that seemed blasphemous to the orthodox Calvinist, were held and preached in Boston before 1800, yet the modern thinkers were reluctant to

break with the conservatives among whom they had been brought up. Both parties continued for a time in church fellowship with each other. Both believed in the same Bible and in the same Christian discipleship. The liberals desired a free conscience from its bondage to antique theories, to allow a freer interpretation of the Bible and the teachings of Christ, and this desire had in it the seeds of ultimate separation. The Episcopal society worshipping in King's Chapel, Boston, had been demoralized during the Revolution, and after the contest was over the liberal element in the church was strong enough to call and ordain a liberal minister, the youthful James Freeman. He made radical changes in the liturgy to conform to liberal opinions regarding the Trinity, and brought into existence the first specifically Unitarian church in New England. Episcopalians were not vitally affected, however, in other places, but Congregational churches speedily began to announce themselves as Unitarian. Worcester, Portland, and Plymouth, where the old Mayflower church joined in the defection, became Unitarian centers. In 1805 David Tappan, teacher of Calvinistic theology at Harvard, was succeeded by Henry Ware, well known for his liberal opinions. This event led to a more outspoken expression of opinion on both sides. In 1808 the Calvinists established a theological school of their own at Andover. Two years later Park Street church, Boston, was opened under the shadow of Beacon Hill to defend the faith of the fathers. In 1819 a divinity school with a Unitarian faculty was established at Harvard, affiliated with the college. Liberal organs were started, a publication society organized. The American Unitarian Association was created in 1825.

At last Unitarians were driven to avow their belief from the pulpit and through the press. Ministers and congregations were compelled to choose their place. One by one the churches declared themselves, until a hundred and twenty-five, four-fifths of them in Massachusetts, had be-

come definitely Unitarian. Among these were all the Congregational churches of Boston except the Old South and Park Street, and most of the oldest churches of the Commonwealth. The most eminent men of the State sympathized with the movement. Wealth and culture were on its side. Under these conditions it is not strange that the Unitarians looked for an extensive enlargement of their influence and power. In 1818 the Unitarians secured a legal decision that recognized the legal right of a majority of the parish to control the church property, whether members of the church or not. By this means many meeting-houses and endowments passed into the hands of those who were not in sympathy with a majority of the actual church members. In all ninety-six churches were lost to Trinitarian Congregationalism.

In 1819 William Ellery Channing preached an epoch-making sermon in Baltimore, and became the recognized leader of Unitarianism in America. "Henceforth, for good or ill, Liberalism—ranging in degree from the Arianism of Channing to the Rationalism of Parker—was a factor to be taken account of in all estimates of New England's religious life." Henceforth the doctrine of the dignity of man with divine possibilities wrapped up in his nature was to be set over against the theory of total depravity and the Fall; of man working out his own salvation through character culture rather than accepting the atonement of a Divine Mediator; of the unity of God instead of the Trinity; of divine immanence more emphatic than transcendence; of the importance of life here rather than preparation for a life beyond. The schism had become complete. /

The working free of the principle of intellectual capacity and integrity is a vital part of the history of religion in America. The principle has suffered from misinterpretations. It has been represented by small groups, or by free lance individuals, like Theodore Parker, who have spoken unadvisedly. It has had to struggle against the

champions of the doctrine of a fixed deposit of revealed truth which is necessary to salvation, a theory held over from the Catholic church by those who believed that the closed mind was the divine ideal for human kind. It has nevertheless fermented the social mind through the processes of scientific investigation and education until it has permeated with its principles the current thought about religion.

Unitarianism was only an early phase of the tendency towards rationalizing religion. In proportion to the size of its membership the humanizing influence of Unitarianism was remarkably strong, but the sect did not expand except among liberal-minded people in Eastern New England and their kin elsewhere. Beginning as a protest against Calvinism, it owed its positive creed to certain eminent leaders like Channing and Emerson. Channing proclaimed the innate worth of every man, and logically became a champion of the freedom of the slave. Emerson preached the immanence of God. He led people to think of their religion as a very real, practical thing; to think of God as an unseen but effective Presence working out his will in nature and in man.

When New England Congregationalism had sloughed off Unitarianism it might have been expected to remain true to Calvinism. But the spirit of the age was against it, and individuals who were thinking in new categories in history and science and ethics, could not continue to think in the old ways of religion. The sap of modernism was running in the old trunk as well as in the new branches. Life was expanding in politics, in society. It was reflected in literature, in philanthropy, in movements for social reconstruction. It was beating against prison bars everywhere. And New England theology was one of the prisons.

Horace Bushnell was the apostle of progress in orthodox circles. He championed the cause of the children, who had been cursed by Calvinism, treated as tainted with

sin, and helpless to be saved from eternal damnation, when he declared that the child was endowed with a moral life which could be cultivated as he grew, so that he would never know himself other than as a Christian, becoming ever more conscious of the God within him as together they worked out his salvation. It was the duty of the church to cherish and cultivate this budding flower of religion in every child, to lead him to a fuller understanding of the divinity within him, to train him as a child of God, not threaten him as a child of sin and an object of God's wrath. Bushnell discarded the old view of the atonement, denying that Christ took upon himself the sufferings of humanity that he might reconcile God to man, declaring rather that the work of Christ was to reconcile man to God, whose love was infinite.

Against ill health and the bitter hostility of most of his fellow Congregationalists Bushnell contended for a more wholesome ethical faith, holding to the Trinitarian belief, though explaining the doctrine differently from the conservatives, but blasting out from the adamant quarry of the New England theology rough-hewn stones for the foundations of a new and better system. Bushnell was the New England pioneer of modern liberal orthodoxy.

From the justice and mercy of God modern Christian thought moved on to an emphasis upon his love. It was unreasonable to believe that the heart of a God whom Jesus Christ called Father could be as stern as Calvinistic theology made out. Ministers remembered that the parable of the Prodigal Son was in the New Testament, and they began to preach forgiving love as the central quality of Divinity. Decades earlier individuals had proclaimed "the larger hope" that the thought of such a God warranted. Enough of them had thus reacted against the hopeless doctrines of predestination and future punishment to organize Universalist churches. Universalism stood for the extreme belief that the loving Father would not permit any of his children to perish, that somehow



he would find a way to win them all to himself. In this comfortable hope it was easy to minimize the importance of sin, and the orthodox spoke against the doctrine as dangerous, but the emphasis upon divine love passed over into orthodox circles, as the humanistic emphasis of the Unitarians proved contagious.

Henry Ward Beecher from his influential pulpit in Brooklyn became the leading exponent of this doctrine of divine love. The emphasis of his preaching was the result of a personal experience, which he related in these words: "It pleased God to reveal to my wandering soul the idea that it was his nature to love a man in his sins for the sake of helping him out of them; that he did not do it out of compliment to Christ, or to a law, or a plan of salvation, but from the fulness of his great heart; that he was a being not made mad by sin, but sorry; that he was not furious with wrath towards the sinner, but pitied him—in short that he felt towards me as my mother felt towards me, to whose eyes my wrongdoing brought tears, who never pressed me so close to her as when I had done wrong, and who would fain with her yearning love lift me out of trouble. . . . And when I found that it was Christ's nature to lift men out of weakness to strength, out of impurity to goodness, out of everything low and debasing to superiority, I felt that I had found a God." The love of God revealed in Christ became Beecher's central theme, but he became also a champion of a theology that accepted the conclusions of modern science, and seemed to many the arch-heretic of his time. Lyman Abbott, his successor in Plymouth pulpit, was destined to be the guide of many conservative church people into an understanding and appreciation of the new discoveries of science and their application to Christian thought.

The acquisition of knowledge about the universe was going on with astounding rapidity in the nineteenth century. The astronomer was piercing the heavens with new and better instruments, and was discovering the immen-

sity of starry space. The biologist was analyzing with his microscope the tiniest forms of life and discovering laws that bind the whole animal world together. The chemist and the physicist were unravelling marvellous secrets of matter and energy. As the discoveries of Galileo and Copernicus and Newton had changed human conceptions about the solar system, so the telescope, the spectroscope, and the microscope in the hands of patient scientists profoundly altered all previous conceptions of present and future life.

The first and most far-reaching result of scientific study was the demonstration of the power of the human reason to get back of phenomena and formulate laws and principles that were more than guess work, far more dependable than philosophers and theologians had been able to determine. The nineteenth century proved once for all that the mind of man, limited though it might be, was qualified to know and interpret God and his works. The scientific mind found itself in conflict with the theological mind. The old ideas did not surrender without a struggle, a struggle that has revived with new vigor since the World War, but it was a losing fight for the old, because the new was in harmony with the conclusions that were being reached in all intellectual circles.

A second result was the discovery of the unity of life and law, that everywhere in the universe, in the most distant nebula, in the tiniest amœba, and in the mind of man, God worked through law, causes had their regular effects, life was always in process. This dependability of God and the universe ran counter to the Calvinistic idea of the arbitrary will of God. Instead of man's being in the grip of a wilful deity, he was hedged about by a natural law that seemed at first relentless, until one learned to co-operate with law.

A third result was the theory of evolution as an explanation of the natural process that was evidently the great fact of the universe. The constant change that was going

on even in the tiniest atom was not a purposeless flux. The restless energy of nature was moulding and remoulding its products for the development of something better. Through the influences of heredity and environment the inner capacity was unfolding to a fuller, richer growth. This idea of evolution was not new. Greek philosophers had held it as a theory, but it remained for the era of scientific investigation to demonstrate it. It required a mass of scientific data to produce a definite hypothesis. When Charles Darwin published his epoch-making "Origin of Species" in 1859 he supplied a key to the half-understood mass of scientific facts, suggesting as a hypothesis the theory of natural selection as the probable method by which the process went on. His explanation of its working in the world made it possible to formulate a system of universal law and to classify knowledge so abundantly acquired. But the doctrine of evolution impinged upon the long-accepted ideas of the church. Those things which had been regarded as fundamental in the creeds were called in question—the creation of man, the origin of sin, the reality of the supernatural. The authority of Scripture was seriously threatened, and men began to feel the foundation of their faith slipping away from them. If evolution should be accepted as the method of creation then the earth was countless ages old, and life had been developing through countless forms for inconceivable æons of time. Geology proclaimed it, and palæontology and embryology buttressed it with infallible proofs. But if this were so, the teachings of the first chapter of Genesis could not be historically correct, and where was the authority of the inspired book? If evolution should be accepted, then man had been ascending the ladder of progress from the beginning of his animal birth, and the story of the fall was a myth. Anthropology declared it, and archæology and history bore witness to the facts. But if this was so, where was the theology of Calvinism, and whither would this strange teaching lead? Evolu-

tion was producing a revolution in theology. After a little spiritually minded men who were scholars as well attempted to harmonize what seemed to be in conflict. Then it began to appear that the conflict was rather between science and theology than between science and religion. It was a matter of interpretation. The great truths of religion that were back of all the theologies might have been misunderstood but they were unchanged. Theologies had changed with the passing centuries. Romanism had given way in all the most enlightened countries to Protestantism; Calvinism had been crumbling before the more hopeful and more truly evangelistic Arminianism of a later day. It might be possible to reconstruct theology in the light of modern science.

The new thought gave a tremendous impulse to the progressive element in the American churches, but it aroused the bitter hostility of those who saw the citadels of the faith threatened. Unfortunately the attitude of science encouraged the hostility. Many scientists were so enamored of their facts and hypotheses that they claimed too much. They seemed to take pleasure in the destruction of that which was old. They inclined towards a materialistic explanation of all phenomena to the exclusion of spiritual reality altogether. The result was a war of words between the scientists and the theologians not very creditable to either party, a war that ended in the discomfiture of the reactionary theologians, but in the enlightenment of the scientists regarding the validity and value of religion, and presently they found that even the hypothesis of Darwin needed to take account of the mutations of de Vries, that physics had to be reconstructed on the basis of energy rather than of mechanism, and that if not soul at least personality in man had to be reckoned with in a study of ultimate values.

Fortunately there were open-minded men in both camps, scientists who did not lose their sense of balance, and theologians who could assimilate and harmonize knowl-

edge. The rationalizing process went on in the American churches. Ministers spoke more freely in the pulpits, men and women who went to college listened appreciatively to the new interpretations. Even the theological schools, built as strongholds of orthodoxy, were affected. Andover Theological Seminary, founded by the Congregationalists to offset the Unitarian defection, the leading school of the denomination in the country, became the seat of a controversy that almost wrecked the school. There Edwards A. Park, the last of the old guard of the New England theology and a giant in intellect, was the defender of Calvinistic orthodoxy. But Andover could not escape the currents of modern thought that were at their flood, and though no very radical tendencies appeared on examination, it was apparent from *Progressive Orthodoxy*, published by the faculty, that new ideas were in the ascendant.

The theory of development had ramifications in the field of religion that threatened other startling consequences. Literary and historical critics had long been studying the origins of the books of the Bible. They were showing it to be a library of history and poetry, sage wisdom and fiction, containing a wealth of spiritual truth, but by no means to be regarded as an armory of proof texts for the support of dogma, or as a cyclopedia of scientific, historical or philosophical knowledge. Applying the theory of evolution, the critic found in the Old Testament a record of the development of the Hebrew religious consciousness through many centuries, and in the New Testament a crowning revelation of the possibilities of spiritual development in Jesus of Nazareth. Among liberal Christians the Bible took its place alongside the sacred books of other religions as the product of the best thought of the race. A study of the human mind in the light of the new knowledge soon produced a psychology of religion, and a study of comparative religion made plain the contribution of other faiths than Christianity, and modified the attitude of foreign missionaries to the religions of the people among



whom they taught. A study of the religious nature and of religious history revealed the importance of experience as the true foundation of theology and of reason as the interpreter of experience. Religious experience became the subject of study in the philosophical laboratory as well as the theme of the evangelist in the meeting-house. William James at Harvard College brought together and published "Varieties of Religious Experience," a very popular book at the close of the century.

For a time the new theology was open to the double charge that it was indefinite and demoralizing. It gave the mind no definite system to grasp, but left it to flounder. In minimizing the emotional element in religion, appealing to an enlightened conscience, calling upon the intellect in calm, cold deliberation to debate the claims of religion, the warmth of affection and exuberance of feeling that characterized the "seasons of refreshing" that the churches had enjoyed, was destroyed. Those churches that depended on the stirrings of the Spirit in the former channels were least receptive to the new teaching. It was years before it began to appear that recruits to the churches were more intelligent and less mercurial in their religious loyalties, and that the gains in religious essentials were more than the losses. It was quite patent that young people who were saturated with scientific teaching would lose religion altogether without radical readjustments, and that church leaders, if intelligent and honest, must take sympathetic cognizance of the new thought.

Gradually the content of the new theology took shape. Wise interpreters in speech and writing explained the meaning of religion in terms of the vital and dynamic rather than of the mechanical and static. They did not translate their faith into dogmas to be fitted into creeds, but they tried to clarify ideas that they might serve as a basis for constructive service, for faith without works was dry and dead. In substance their theology was, first, a belief in the immanence of God. God is not an absentee

God directing a machine from without, but a God indwelling in his creation, perpetually refashioning the universe as the expression of his thought, manifesting himself through nature, through history, and through the heart and brain of man in all ages; quickening the soul of humanity in the individual and in the mass; leading man ever upward through love and sacrifice toward the ideal of humanity revealed in the perfect Christ. And the evolutionist, seeking to coöperate with God in this uplift of humanity, "believes in religion not as a creed, a ritual, or a church order, which are at the best but the instruments of religion, but as self-control, righteousness, reverence, hope, love,—the life of God in the soul of man."

In the second place the new theology emphasized law as God's method of working. There is a revaluation of reason in religion. There is a feeling that miracle, which is a phenomenon transcending our knowledge of nature and human experience, is not supernaturalism breaking over law, but an act of God that could be explained if our understanding of divine law was large enough. The new theology tends to deny any chasm between the natural and the supernatural, such as the warfare between science and religion laid stress upon. God is the center of both spheres; if there is any distinction between them it is that the supernatural is the outer sphere that does not come within the region of our sense perceptions.

Thirdly, the new theology humanized Jesus Christ. Not that it stripped him of divinity, but it made his relations to human beings more real. The interest in his relation to God removed into the background. The metaphysical definition seemed unimportant. In a unique sense Christ is Son of God, infinitely removed from sinning man, but for all practical purposes he is one of us. Present interest centers on the Christ of history and the Christ of experience. Biblical criticism is in large measure a process going on in an effort to get at Jesus of Naza-

reth back of the garments woven for him by theology and even by the gospel writers. The modern Christian wants to know the deeds of kindness that he wrought and the words of wisdom that he spoke, and to have an insight into his wonderful personality. His divinity is spoken of as of character rather than of being. Similarly with the Christ of experience. Men want to feel the spirit of Christ touching their lives and warming their hearts with his glow; they care less for a series of articles of faith about him. They want to know personally that he is risen, not because there is evidence for it as an historical fact alone. This is the attitude of the new theology.

In the fourth place, the new theology reinterpreted the work of Christ. It thought of him as the truest interpretation of God. Old Testament writers caught glimpses of the meaning of deity; Jesus unveiled the character of God. All revelation is the picture that is presented to the human mind, it may be through the channel of nature, through Scripture or through human speech. Because Jesus knew God and men supremely well he was supremely able to reveal. He is the medium of atonement also, but the new theology discarded the old theories of atonement. The Son had no need to propitiate a just and angry God. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. By the law of his loving nature he sacrificed himself that men might love him. The death of Christ is significant because it was the culminating act of a life of sacrifice, but his life is most important. Atonement is reconciliation; it is accomplished by the impact of the personality of Jesus upon the heart of the individual, and it is complete when the individual becomes at one with God. Christ is an atonement for sin to bring man into a larger life. The idea of salvation changes. According to the new thought salvation is not from a place of torment but from a state of sin; not always from the bad to the good, but from satisfaction with a lesser good to a

yearning for a higher good; from spiritual inertia or even atrophy to life and a more abundant life.

Out of this grew the new eschatology. The future is another word for opportunity. Christ may come in visible presence; it is certain that he is here now invisibly. Heaven and hell may be real places; it is certain that they are states of consciousness. Salvation may bring the individual into greater happiness, but the goal of life is ever larger opportunity for service in God's kingdom. That kingdom finds its place in the sphere of social relationships. Eschatology is to many persons another name for social ethics.

It is not to be supposed that the conclusions of the new theology became fixed or generally accepted. The rank and file of men had as little interest in the conclusions of theology as in scientific hypotheses or the arguments of international law. As a Salvation Army writer has said: "They care no more for higher criticism than for higher mathematics." But the more thoughtful people were moving with impressive unanimity to most of these conclusions. Unity is the key word of modern thought. God is a unitary force operating in a universe. All life is one, and the line between the human and the divine is hard to draw, if not as imaginary as a line of geometry. Nature is the projection of God's thought into the realm of the visible; man is the pygmy expression of the possibilities inherent in vital existence; he is to God as the electron is to the infinite force of divine immanence. Jesus Christ revealed the degree of union that is possible between man and God. All history is the story of progress toward harmony, mainly unconscious, but none the less real. The struggle of the future is to be an effort to harmonize rival factions among men, to bring nature and man into constructive relations instead of the endurance of a pain economy, and to put man *en rapport* with God. He who strives to interpret God, to explain the workings of nature, or to reconcile social groups, with the thrill of this con-

ception in his heart, is applying the new theology to the needs of his own time. With these thoughts current in the church mind American religion was in process of rationalization.



## IX. SOCIALIZING RELIGION

MID-VICTORIAN religion in America was conventional in method and organization in a period when social life was changing rapidly. After the appendix of slavery had been removed from the body politic, and the patient had recovered from the operation, the American nation entered upon a period of renewed prosperity. The eighties and nineties make up a period of rapidly expanding business and industry. New inventions were revolutionizing economic and social life. People were leaving the country for the town by the thousand; immigrants were coming from Europe by the million. Cities sprawled out into suburbs, bedrooms of the cities' business people, while the factory workers crowded into flats and tenements. The integrity of family life was threatened by the new demand for working women and by the tenement, the lodging house, and the apartment hotel. It cost more to live, and young people delayed marriage. The freedom and the new economic opportunity for women tended to increase divorce. The city afforded better facilities for education, wider opportunity for culture and recreation, but education, recreation, government, aesthetics, morals were becoming commercialized. The spirit of individualism controlled the city; business was its central interest. The city's heart needed religion, but religion was becoming dwarfed, crowded out, as the church building was dwarfed and crowded by the towering office building. Catholics were hard pressed to provide church accommodations for European immigrants, and Protestants failed to adapt themselves to downtown conditions, and followed the American people to the residential wards and the suburbs.

The influx of foreigners accustomed to making Sunday a holiday tended to relax the rigor of Sunday in Eastern cities, as that rigor had been relaxed already in the West. Sunday excursions on the railroads and steamboats, recreation parks at the seashore or on the electric car lines, the well-padded Sunday newspapers, were all offering counter attractions to people who were accustomed to go to church. In this situation the church needed to re-define religion and readjust its methods, but it was slow to learn. The minister preached on conventional subjects from an orthodox point of view, pointing out the duty of individuals to cultivate a saving faith, and persuading young people after the manner of their parents to assume the responsibility of membership for the good of their souls and for the upbuilding of the church. The Sunday school and the midweek prayer meeting helped to stimulate an interest in religion, but it was growing harder to arouse even the temporary interest that a revival could generate, and fewer church leaders believed in revivals. Occasionally itinerant evangelists like Moody and Sankey, held mass meetings in the larger cities, and with preaching and gospel song won recruits and recovered deserters for the church.

Up to 1890 most city churches seemed to thrive. People making new homes in the city added strength to their membership and financial resources. Sunday schools numbered their pupils by the hundred. Benevolent contributions increased. Mission chapels were started in growing sections of the city. Then conditions began to change. A shifting population drifted into the churches and out again. The more successful people moved out into the suburbs. Young people from the country crowding into the boarding houses, and immigrants new to American ways, required a different method of approach from that which had been in vogue. The family church seemed no longer universally suited to the new conditions. In the suburbs the churches were more prosperous but not

progressive, little disposed to concern themselves with the city problem or to adopt any but routine methods for themselves.

Religion downtown was conspicuous for its absence. Occasionally a religious group undertook to supply religion in homeopathic quantity by planting a mission in an especially degraded district. The purpose was not to improve the community, but to save individuals from shipwreck of their lives. Such a mission as that of Jerry McAuley in New York saved poor outcasts and kept them steady through the influence of its nightly meetings, but the evangelistic mission made no impression on the unchurched mass. Another evangelistic experiment was the "temple" or tabernacle, or a tent on a vacant lot in the summer. These were designed to catch and hold the drifting population of the city. Sometimes the objective was a particular class like sailors or immigrants, sometimes the American working people. These assembly places had free sittings for individuals instead of family pews, popular programs of music and sermonette, but they made little impression on the city's life. Their greatest service was in holding in church connection persons who would have drifted away from the churches when they were away from home.

The failure of the church to adapt itself to the growing city made it inevitable that religion should find some other avenue of approach. In 1851 the Young Men's Christian Association was adopted from England as a means of keeping under religious influence the thousands of young men who were seeking their fortunes in the cities. Its popularity was evident by a growth in membership from 108,000 to 232,000 in the decade between 1883 and 1893. The Young Women's Christian Association was organized with a similar purpose for the young women employed in stores and offices. Religious meetings were prominent at first in the programme of these organizations, but soon buildings were erected with reception rooms and assembly

halls, libraries and gymnasiums, and evening classes, lectures and concerts provided aids to culture and recreation.

These associations adapted their methods to the needs of special groups, but they were middle class institutions, like the churches, and they did not appeal to the lower stratum of the population. The Salvation Army found its mission downtown. There it preached the gospel to the lowest classes. Its bands paraded the streets and gathered crowds, and its exhorters preached to them from the street corners. Its soldiers lived in downtown barracks. The Army added social services to its evangelism after 1889. It maintained lodging-houses, food depots, employment bureaus and rescue homes, and distributed Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners to the children of the poor. It went to the sick and miserable in their homes, until Army lassies were loved as angels of the slums. The Volunteers of America with less military autocracy organized a similar mission, making a special effort to carry a religion of hope and good cheer to the inmates of prisons all over the country.

Meantime religion was diffusing its spirit still more widely in various kinds of philanthropic and social enterprises. Experience was proving that the sympathetic humanitarianism of the former generation did not cure social ills. It was becoming clear that to solve social problems it was necessary to dig down to the roots and find the causes, and then with improved methods to work patiently for the eradication of the evils. Experience was strongly reinforced by the new social sciences. After 1890 these shared the attention of students in the universities and outside with the natural sciences that were so popular. Indeed, Darwin's study of evolution already had stimulated Herbert Spencer in England to apply the theory to society, and in economics, politics, ethics, and sociology, laws and principles were worked out that were momentous for the future of mankind. The reaction of sociological discoveries was to stimulate social experi-

ments, but there was disagreement as to methods. It seemed to some that a radical reorganization of society was necessary, and they inclined towards a form of socialism. Others were satisfied with the slower method of social evolution. They adopted experiments, like the charity organizations and social settlements of England, and devised new ones, like civic federations and woman's clubs. Through these agencies they hoped to ameliorate and eventually to cure social ills.

Organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association and the charity organization society were reminders that the religious spirit no longer functioned through the single institution of the church. The church had controlled family life and education, and had been the instrument of charity in the Middle Ages, but by the last part of the nineteenth century the family and the school were no longer dominated by the church, and charity had passed to the state and to voluntary organizations. In America church and state were separate. Since the Reformation the church had concerned itself almost entirely with personal religion. But religion had been passing through a humanizing process, and the spirit of religion had been penetrating the social body. Many persons found a more satisfactory expression of religion in social benefactions of money and service than in the maintenance of a cult or the strengthening of an institution. Three-fourths of the social workers were members of churches, and from the religion of the churches they received their impulse, but the church did not give them adequate scope for their energies.

Despite the enormous economic gains of the Industrial Revolution the shock of social readjustment left many individuals poor and miserable. Not all handicraftsmen could adapt themselves to the factory and the machine displaced many. Even those who were able to make the adjustment found wages low, hours of labor long and wearisome, and living conditions in town barracks squalid



and dismal. Poverty and ill health needed relief. In Great Britain, where the Revolution began, leading churchmen undertook measures of reform. Maurice and Kingsley, Shaftesbury and Chalmers, became pioneers and prophets of a new social era. Edward Denison and Octavia Hill probed the hard lot of the city's poor. Ruskin and Carlyle wrote bravely of the people's wrongs and the ill harmony of God's created world. These were the inspirers of the new social movement, organizers of relief and reform. The first charity organization society was created in London in 1869 to federate all the philanthropies of London. The enterprise in the United States was organized on the English model by an Anglican minister who had settled in Buffalo. Societies for the improvement of the poor had come into existence earlier, but their charity was unscientific. The newer methods were adopted in the large cities of the country, and a National Conference of Charities and Corrections, later called the National Conference of Social Work, tied the local societies together.

The social settlement was the result of an effort to bring together educated, well-to-do, philanthropic people and the poor, untrained, struggling masses in the worse parts of the city. It was not intended to administer charity; it was not even an institutional center necessarily. It was merely a place where a group of high-minded men and women with the love of humanity in their hearts made a home which might be an oasis in the city wilderness, and where the people of the desert might camp for an hour and drink of the refreshing spring. The men and women who planted the oasis did not obtrude religion upon those whom they met, for Catholics and Jews were most numerous. They invited the people to classes and clubs, and they visited families in a friendly way in their homes, coöperating frequently with the charitable societies. They encouraged sobriety and thrift. They were friends. Adopted from England, the settlement idea spread, in

Boston under the auspices of Andover Theological Seminary, in New York and Chicago by university graduates. Sometimes the settlement was connected with a church, more frequently not, but always the spirit that animated the workers in the settlements was the religious spirit of Jesus.

Much of the misery in the cities was due to inefficient municipal government, to inadequate regulation of social conduct. The independent spirit of Americans was hard to curb, and in politics as in business nearly every one looked out for his personal profit first. City authorities were slow to vote and enforce building and health regulations, and unsafe factories and unsanitary tenements prepared the grist for fire horrors and tuberculous wards in the hospitals. Medical science did its best for the sick, and Christian science offered its cure for body and soul alike, but the grist was ground faster than the cures could be made, for the evils that were the cause were not removed. Disease was reënforced by intemperance and sexual impurity, and the crime percentage of the cities was unreasonably high. The fault was not entirely with the government, of course. The best intentioned officials found it difficult to cope with the cheap theaters, the unprincipled hotels and saloons, the unscrupulous landlords, and the sharpers of every kind who battered on the poor and unfortunate; but an inefficient government aggravated conditions that would have been bad anywhere.

Citizen reform movements swept unprincipled governments out of office occasionally, when the conditions became unendurable, but the old order returned under cover. Law and order leagues and societies for good citizenship served as rallying points for public-spirited citizens. The surest means of permanent gain was the education of the young people to higher ideals of city government. The claims of good government were emphasized by young people's societies in the churches, especially the Christian Endeavor Society. Here and there the church or a min-

ister took the lead in a campaign of municipal reform. A decided gain came with the organization, of the first City Club in New York City in 1892, and early in the twentieth century a wave of reform swept over the country.

The spirit of reform extended from government to business. American business push had created keen competition, which frequently made men selfish and ruthless. Corporations and trusts had been organized and monopolies attempted, sometimes by very harsh methods. The individual ethics of an earlier day did not meet the need of the new business situation, and the churches were so negligent of the social ethics of Jesus that it was possible for men to be punctilious in ecclesiastical observances and to hold high lay positions in the church when they were practising business methods that were unjustifiable from a truly Christian point of view. When the American conscience awoke, spurred into action by the muckrakers of the press and by the strenuous spirit of Theodore Roosevelt, business cleaned house, ashamed that national expansion and increasing prosperity had been making ambitions sordid and methods debasing. Muckrakers exaggerated. Business was rendering constantly a service of incalculable value to the people, and the vast expansion of credit by which business growth was achieved showed how trustworthy men in business actually were, but the profiteering spirit needed the curb. The net result of the reform, some of it enforced by national legislation, was to print social welfare in capital letters in the dictionary of business.

The most knotty social problem in the centers of population as the nation passed into the twentieth century was the problem of industry as applied in the mill and the mine and the workshop everywhere. In the land of opportunity, where Americans had carved out primitive success and whither European immigrants had come with visions of prosperity and happiness the bulk of the profits of toil had gone to the few. Industrial ethics permitted

the employer to make the conditions of industry. The worker found it a stubborn problem, first, of making a living, then of making the living contribute to the enrichment of life. The problem was economic, but it was moral too, inasmuch as labor and its reward made or unmade human personality. Wages could satisfy the elemental needs and make it possible to sustain a family, but there were larger questions of freedom, justice, comity, coöperation, personal and social development, involved in the labor problem. The problem developed into a long struggle for power, the employee demanding and the employer opposing increased privileges and a broadening recognition of labor. Hostility bred hatred and suspicion. In spite of the good will or sense of expediency that led many employers to undertake various kinds of welfare work, the disposition of the employing class was to surrender as little as possible of the power to control, and the worker, as he slowly won more privileges by means of unified effort, developed an unquenchable determination to profit at the expense of the employer, and, if need be, of the public.

In all these social movements the church took little part. Charity visitors and settlement workers were affiliated with the churches. Municipal and business reformers were often leaders in the churches. Workingmen were in the churches in large numbers, even though they had a feeling that the church was too much in alliance with the capitalist. Ministers here and there were outspoken in their demands for social reform. But the churches as institutions and most of the people who constituted the churches believed that religion did not include social affairs, and that the church should be as separate from business and industry as from the state. Ministers, discovering the social teaching of Jesus and the Hebrew prophets, cried out for justice and kindness, and proclaimed the ethics of a Christian society. Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, and Walter Rauschenbusch de-

fined and explained social Christianity. A "Brotherhood of the Kingdom" was organized in New York in 1893 among a few ministers who were inspired with the social idea. More church people opposed than heeded them. But the heaven was at work. Small groups inside church circles were determined to bring social questions into the churches and religion into the solution of social questions.

The initial organizations that resulted were concerned particularly with the industrial question. As early as 1887 the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor was organized under the auspices of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and later that church in national convention adopted resolutions sympathetic with the workingman. In 1905 the Presbyterians went so far as to organize a department of church and labor, and recommended that committees of the Home Mission Society appoint sub-committees to make systematic study of the problem locally. A downtown church in New York was reorganized as a Labor Temple. Sometimes ministers, more zealous than well-informed, spoke unadvisedly, or attempted unwise mediation between parties. Sometimes they identified themselves with particular methods of reform that did not meet with general approval. Socialism had its flaming evangelists and its ardent converts who made of its principles a substitute for religion. In spite of unwisdom or opposition the social idea grew steadily in religious circles.

During the first twenty years of the twentieth century all the prominent denominations in America organized social service commissions, some of them with executive secretaries, and issued declarations of social principles. This larger interest was the outcome of the initial interest in the labor problem, but it was soon seen that the labor problem was but one phase of a larger complex social problem. The action taken by the churches was the work of relatively few persons, but persons deeply conscious of social ills, and believing that the church was under



obligation to take cognizance of those ills. Some opposition developed in church assemblies, but the rank and file of church people were democratic, sympathetic with the weaker party, and easily persuaded to adopt the recommendations of a determined committee. In 1908 the Federal Council of Churches, which had been organized to bring the denominations into more effective coöperation, especially for the social application of Christianity, adopted a social creed that became a norm for principle and a goal for effort. The creed declared that the churches must stand for social justice, for the protection of the family and of women and children in industry, for the abatement of the liquor traffic and the conservation of health, for the personal development of every individual and provision for the aged and incapacitated, for better wages and working conditions and the right of the workers to unite, for a new emphasis upon the application of Christian principles to the acquisition and use of property, and for the most equitable division of the product of industry that can ultimately be devised.

Churches began to take an interest in labor by observing as Labor Sunday the day before the annual holiday of Labor Day, and the Federal Council supplied programs for such observance. Ministers' conferences appointed fraternal delegates to labor unions, and the unions reciprocated. Occasionally ministers were invited to arbitrate local labor disputes. Social service committees and officials investigated strikes and general industrial conditions. An Interchurch committee stirred national interest in a particularly vexatious steel strike.

As the social interest broadened in the churches, new methods were adopted. Social service commissions appointed by conventions and assemblies stirred up interest by leaflets, pamphlets and books, and university teachers wrote and spoke on social questions, often lecturing from church or convention platforms. The open forum, developing out of Cooper Union meetings in New York,

showed great possibilities on the Ford Hall platform in Boston, and was adopted in many cities as a means of public enlightenment by free discussion. Ministers and lay leaders coöperated to introduce the forum method into the churches. Sociological courses were incorporated into the curriculum of the theological seminary as well as of the college, and chairs of Christian sociology were placed in the row of honor and dignity. Students of colleges and seminaries went out from school burning with the social spirit, and many who at an earlier time would have trained for the Christian ministry went into other forms of social service. The Young Women's Christian Association became so progressive as to alienate some of its financial supporters.

The most distinctive response to the social appeal was the institutional church. The principle on which it was organized was the obligation of the church to minister to all of the highest needs of the human personality, to supply the deficiencies of life, to stimulate the worthiest ambitions. The institutional church opened its doors every day. It equipped a gymnasium and baths. It provided a reading room and library. It organized classes for mental improvement. It provided wholesome recreation and the social opportunity of clubs. In some cases it opened work rooms, as Wesley had done in England, for persons who were too old or unskilled to compete for employment in the shops. It asked for the contributions of the well-to-do in worn-out goods as well as in money, and salvaged property as well as souls. Institutional churches were criticised as leaving the important interests of the spirit for services of less value, but they vindicated their wider ministry by presenting balance sheets that showed large spiritual as well as social results. Without trying to use social means as a subterfuge for religious propaganda, the churches that showed a real interest in human welfare made the most successful appeal to the highest that was in a man. Churches there were that lost their spiritual

intensity from an excess of the social, but where the proper balance was kept between the two the results were good.

Social problems of all sorts were complicated by the influx of a large alien element into the population. European immigrants had settled America; European immigrants helped to make the country free from the mother country and from the incubus of slavery. But immigration became so great as to threaten social dyspepsia because of unassimilated masses of population. Economic conditions or political disturbances sent hundreds of thousands of Irish, Germans and Scandinavians to share in American life. These were followed after 1890 by a rush of Italians, Poles, and remoter peoples of central and eastern Europe, less akin racially, socially and religiously than most of the earlier comers. The most available opportunities for labor or business were in the industrial centers of the East, and these became flooded with new Americans, eager to share in America's benefits but needing Americanization. When the home missionary societies of the churches perceived that the frontier was vanishing in the West, they turned their attention to the social frontier of the Eastern cities. City missions had been organized denominationally at an earlier time to combine the resources of the local churches for Christian work among the poorer people, but the home mission societies with the resources of a whole denomination could use the newest methods of expansion and influence. Home mission societies coöperated with state missionary organizations in aiding foreign-speaking churches, offering encouragement and help to European groups that had become organized on an American Protestant basis—Scandinavians, Poles, Italians, and all the varieties of European nationalities. Women's societies experimented with Christian social centers in downtown churches and other meeting places, holding health clinics, carrying on clubs and classes, and imitating the most successful methods of the social settlements. Foreign mission societies felt the

impulse of the social gospel, and adopted methods and programs in Asia and Africa similar to those in vogue in America.

Through the home mission societies the churches wrestled with another problem that was almost purely American. This was the problem of the rural community. Drained of much of its best blood and greatest energy by the exodus of population from the country to the town, and with small, discouraged churches galvanized occasionally by a temporary revival of religious interest, the villages and hamlets and open farming country needed readjustment to the age of cities. Their farms were cultivated, sometimes scientifically, oftener by the rule of thumb. Their schools were organized by the rule of three, and parsimoniously supported. Their churches were not able to support a settled minister, at least not a trained man. Social methods were old-fashioned. Isolation kept people individualistic, often ignorant, sometimes anti-social in conduct. Moral conditions were usually not so bad as in the cities, but culture, whether moral or intellectual, was on a low level. There was an emptiness rather than a badness to rural life.

Under these circumstances young people could not be blamed if they yielded to the attractions of the city, with its glitter and glory, its economic opportunity, and its round of recreations. If they were ambitious to get ahead, the city offered a chance to excel. If they wanted only a good time, the city stretched out its hands in welcome. And they went by the thousand. Their brawn and brain were the making of the town, the impoverishment of the country. Unless the exodus should be checked, the strength of the nation would be sapped at its roots and the agricultural resources of the nation would be dried up. This situation caused concern, even alarm, and led to a propaganda for a better rural life. President Roosevelt in 1908 appointed a Country Life Commission to make a nation-wide investigation. The Commission, in making

its report, stressed the importance of the churches as institutions that could lead the way to a richer country life. Church leaders became interested. They saw the opportunity of the church to stimulate the people, for religion could interpret opportunity and obligation in the finest terms. Rural life conferences under church and Young Men's Christian Association auspices discussed how the church could inspire better agriculture, better business methods, better education, better recreation, and other needed improvements. Government departments and agricultural colleges coöperated. A rural literature came into existence within ten years. Farmers' institutes, granges, Chautauquas, offered attractive speakers and gathered willing listeners. Educational associations discussed the possibilities of the rural schools. Research agencies surveyed counties and states. Home mission societies appointed rural church secretaries, and experiments followed investigations. Certain local churches specialized in music, others in agriculture. Clubs for the boys and girls worked out programs of activity. Rural ministers were paid larger salaries, and better men were attracted and trained. Theological seminaries provided courses on the rural church and community. Demonstration points were selected, and thorough tests were given to specific methods. Over-churched communities found it wise to combine their religious energies and resources in a federated church. A division of territory was arranged amicably in unoccupied areas to avoid duplication of ecclesiastical effort or the omission of it.

The entrance of America into the World War created another social situation. A growing opposition to war as a means of settling international differences, and a growing sense of American security had produced a spirit of optimism that made it difficult to believe that America could be drawn into war. Churches had organized a peace union, along with other associations, that were thought to



be so many bonds of peace. Quakers had long preached peace as one of their primary obligations.

The churches, like the American people that composed them, responded patriotically to the war. They unfurled the flags of the nation and the Allies. They encouraged the men to join the armed forces of the United States in defense of democracy and civilization. They urged generous contribution to war funds. They opened their rooms for Red Cross activities. They preached and prayed and sang for victory. All this was distasteful to the pacifists, who declared that the church forgot its mission of peace. It was foolish to skeptics, who charged the church with failing to keep the world out of war. But it could not be otherwise, for the appeal to loyalty is of the essence of religion, and loyalty to the highest social and religious principles seemed to be involved in the war. As in other wars, the church contributed its quota of ministers for chaplaincies in army and navy. Students from church colleges and theological seminaries left their classrooms and undertook service where they could find it. Rolls of honor were bulletined outside and inside of the churches, and soon gold stars were testifying to the supreme sacrifice. Denominations combined to organize liberty churches where war workers congregated, even Jews and Catholics uniting with Protestants in the common undertaking.

The war made its contribution to the churches. It aroused them to energetic service in a cause that called for great devotion. The greatest service that the churches as organizations could render was to create and sustain national morale; in this they gave conspicuous aid. They learned the value of interdenominational coöperation through wartime commissions and committees in which they had a part. They learned to understand human nature better, to appreciate its real worth and the height to which it can rise under testing. They learned the attitude of the man in the ranks to religion, his appreciation of the real and his scorn of the fictitious, his ignorance of the re-

ligious alphabet, and his instinctive response to the mystical in the sacrament of the church or in the experience of the zero hour in trench or hospital. In many instances the church was humbled as it realized its failures, stimulated as it sensed its opportunities. The war left the churches with new social and coöperative machinery and it encouraged interdenominational effort. The National Catholic War Council proved a convenient agency for a broader social work among Catholics after the methods of the Knights of Columbus and the Young Men's Christian Association. The Protestants had found coöperation so delightful and war drives so easy that they enthusiastically organized an Interchurch Movement on a generous scale, and appealed to the people of the nation to underwrite an ambitious program that should outshine that of laymen's movements already tried. Then came the disillusionment, the recrudescence of denominational feeling, and a drive against social Christianity. These were the inevitable aftermath of the war, concomitants of the decline of enthusiasm and idealism, a part of the debasement that war always brings. But the war had mapped out possibilities for time to come.

## X. SPIRITUALIZING RELIGION

WHILE a few thoughtful or altruistic persons were broadening the range of religion by rationalizing and socializing it, most people continued to think of religion as primarily a personal affair between them and God, a faith and a feeling rather than an intellectual concept or an altruistic purpose. They valued religion as a spiritual asset, lifting them above the sordid experiences that every day brought and linking them with another world where God was. They valued the Bible because it moved in the realm of the spiritual, and stimulated a religious attitude and purpose. They valued the church because it made easier the effort that was necessary to get to Heaven. The religion of the American was not very thoughtful, but it was definite and real.

The largest number of religious people were Protestants, and belonged to churches that made an emotional experience basic in religion. Conversion was the technical term in use to explain that experience, preferably as thorough in manner as that of the Apostle Paul. Christians harked back to the primitive church as their pattern. That church was not perfect, but it was the nearest to its founder. The first disciples caught something of his spirit, with all their failure to understand the fineness of his character. American church people believed that the bond that held together the first Christians was spiritual, not ecclesiastical. They were witnesses to the power of the spirit of Christ in human character. They did not call themselves mystics, but they knew by the test of their own experience that the electric flash of spiritual understanding comes neither through the intellect nor through

the church, but through the inner contact of the human spirit with the divine. Whatever the theological explanation of that contact through divine immanence or the possession of the Holy Spirit, there was no question about the reality.

Modern mysticism had mediæval as well as ancient sanction. The mediæval church had its true and its pseudo-mystics, its saints and its impostors. Some of them were forerunners of a spiritual reformation in the old church of Rome, some the heralds of a personal relation with God which was to become the cardinal doctrine of Protestantism. German and Dutch mystics warmed the heart of European Christianity. John Tauler inspired Luther; Hans Denck was an Anabaptist mystic. Thomas à Kempis became the spiritual guide of Catholics and Protestants alike. The succession of mysticism passed to the modern churches through the English Quakers, as rationalism descended through the Socinians. They valued the inner light more highly than the Bible. They believed that the divine illumination was theirs as much as it belonged to other ages. Coupling their mysticism with less creditable opinions that were obnoxious to conventional churches, they were for a time a thorn in the flesh in England and America, but when they had sloughed off their peculiarities they became the transmitters of a faith in the reality of the spirit that has been a useful balance to an extreme advocacy of concrete religion. Nor were the Quakers heedless of external reality. Very often mysticism has wrapped the soul so completely in itself that it is oblivious to everything else. The danger of Christian Science and of the New Thought that were having their vogue at the end of the nineteenth century was at just that point; too much minimizing of the reality of matter and suffering made many indifferent to human woes. Not so with the Quakers. They were pioneers in social reform before the bulk of religious people had become conscious of social misery and wrong.

The definition of spiritual reality did not prove easy for any school of thought. Traditional theology distinguished sharply between the soul and the body, but did not analyze the soul. Modern science found no room for spirit in its categories. The new psychology found evidence in spirit for the divine nature that is the essential part of the human personality and cannot be separated from it. The Puritan struggled for the spiritual mastery of the flesh, and believed in the perseverance of the saints until the spirit should win the victory and enter Heaven its true home. He felt himself but a pilgrim here, an alien in a foreign land. His New World experiences were like his spiritual sojourn in that respect. Rarely did he know ecstatic bliss, but he had his communings with God, and his spiritual satisfactions in spite of the hardness of his creed. Jonathan Edwards believed in the reality of spiritual bliss while yet in the body; he who went down into history as preëminently a theologian and philosopher was first of all by his own valuation a friend of God. The Methodist kindled with spiritual fervor under the touch of a kindlier faith in a universal atonement, and believed that as God called every man to be his friend, so he gave every man who accepted the invitation the witness of the Spirit. Like the Quaker, the Methodist kept his feet on the ground, practising a religion that was concrete, redemptive of bodies as well as souls, careful of social as well as personal need. To him the Bible was the spirit's guide, having authority as well as spiritual food, and he listened with more expectancy to a minister than to any inner voice.

Natural science and Christian Science went to opposite extremes in their attitude towards the immaterial. Because the scientist could not analyze spirit under the microscope or measure its presence by any evidence of the senses, he was too ready to declare it non-existent. He became humbler later on, when the atmosphere became dynamic and matter began to dissolve into something more



ethereal, but science indicated spirit by an interrogation point. Christian Science planted itself on the principle that the material is the unessential. Mary Baker Eddy found that the power of the mind over the body was so great as to relieve the functional disorders of the body, and when she and her followers were able to bring relief from pain to hundreds of persons and perform miracles of healing, it was easy to leap to the conclusion that the spiritual nature was the only reality. "Science and Health" became a companion to the Bible, and Mrs. Eddy co-Savior of the world.

Long before Christian Science had evolved from the mind of its founder faith healing was a well-known practice. The shrine of Lourdes in France and the church of St. Anne de Beaupré in French Canada were places of deposit for the crutches of cripples who had been cured of their ills through spiritual faith. Protestants in their own way, without relics or consecrated shrines, have believed that the prayer of faith is able to bring physical relief, for the Great Spirit is the Great Physician, and what Jesus Christ could do on earth the Father can do in Heaven. The Emmanuel Movement in Boston was the sanest of the spiritual cults, combining the skill of the physician and the power of spiritual suggestion.

Normal evangelical Christians in the churches of America were content to cultivate their spiritual nature by the customary methods of church worship and the prayer meetings. Worship in the meeting house supplied a weekly inspiration to high endeavor, made it easier to do the day's work, reassured the skeptical mind as to ideal values, widened spiritual horizons. The more intimate contact of the prayer room made the mid-week meeting for conference and prayer a holy of holies to aspiring Christians. On that evening at the toll of the bell those who were religiously disposed wended their way to the quiet retreat of church vestry or chapel, and there for an hour engaged in prayer and exchanged their religious experiences under

the leadership of the minister, interspersing exhortation and prayer with spiritual songs. To a Baptist or Methodist or Presbyterian brought up in exemplary fashion this was a perfectly natural practice, and it was sanctioned by the fellowship meetings in the upper room at Jerusalem and by the conventicles of the early Protestants during the period of the Reformation. John Wesley had gained his vital religious experience in a Moravian prayer meeting in London, an experience that made him the founder of one of the most virile religious movements in history. Countless Christians could testify to the help to right living received from the weekly prayer meetings in the churches, and many ministers believed the prayer meeting to be an accurate barometer of the spirituality of the church. But many deeply religious people disliked the familiarity and intimate revelation of one's own spiritual experience; others were indifferent altogether; and as the nineteenth century merged into the twentieth the difficulty of maintaining the prayer meeting became a serious problem in not a few churches. To the outsider the prayer meeting was a matter of indifference; he never attended and never gave it a thought. To the psychologist it was an interesting experiment. He saw men weary with the day's toil or overburdened with business problems, women with obligations in the home, young people who naturally would be attracted elsewhere gather week after week in a barely furnished room, lighted perhaps by only a few smoky lamps and half heated by a decrepit stove, some of the people in the country driving in over muddy or frozen roads. He perceived no visible altar, no evidence of divine presence, only indifferent leadership. He heard discouraging recitals of spiritual defeat, repetitious prayers without much faith, songs poorly sung. But through it all, if he was sensitive to the heart throbs of his kind, he felt the new courage and renewed aspiration and kindling faith in God, and he saw the small company of worshipers scatter to their homes with satisfaction of soul. He could not help believ-

ing in the reality of spiritual experience, however he might explain the process.

The prayer meeting is the nearest approach of the Protestant to the Catholic confessional, except as an individual occasionally pours out his heart to his pastor. Naturally reticent, the Protestant prays best at home, but he values the exchange of thoughts and feelings that is possible in a religious company. The maintenance of the meeting is easier because of the spontaneity of the occasion. After brief opening exercises the leader invites general participation. The absence of liturgy, the custom of extemporaneous prayer, the perfect freedom to speak or to keep silent, the occasional stimulus of music, provides an atmosphere that conduces to contentment. The social contacts make their contribution. The prayer meeting was the hotbed of religious feeling.

Church bodies that magnified emotional religion found that an occasional goad was needed which the meetings for worship and prayer did not supply. Revivals had proved useful for that purpose, and they continued to be the favorite method of arousing religious fervor. It was not regarded as necessary that the revivalist should understand the inner nature of the human mind, if only he obtained certain reactions. The art of getting converts was more important than the psychology of religion. Crude methods of appeal that smacked of the earlier camp meeting days were used by a few evangelists, as in the "Billy" Sunday campaigns. Other speakers understood rightly that the feelings were central in religious experience, and they used an emotional appeal, but they learned the importance of requiring evidences of conversion in consistent Christian living through subsequent months and years. Ministers found out how to employ follow-up methods to secure this result, and organized classes for the training of those who were candidates for church membership.

Catholic and Episcopal churches depended on the edu-

cation and confirmation of their young people for accessions rather than on a process of conversion, and stimulated the spiritual nature by means of the accessories of worship rather than by prayer meetings. Episcopal churches furnished models of architecture from the chancel to the cross-tipped spire. The dignity of their services attracted persons from other communions who loved order and beauty in worship, and in the cities especially the Protestant Episcopal church grew rapidly in popularity and was justly proud of its social standing. The Catholic church had its attractions for those who were not content with the half-way house of Episcopalians, who bathed their souls with delight in the sensuous worship and rested contentedly on the authority exercised by the Catholic clergy. The quiet sanctity of the cathedral, its dim religious light, the candles that burned perpetually on the altar, the soothing music of the great organ—these were voices calling them back to the bosom of mother church. Catholic accessions from Protestantism have not been so numerous in America as might be expected of human nature, but some of them have been of great value to the preaching ministry of the church.

It took Protestantism a long time to appreciate esthetic value. The whole influence of Puritanism was against beauty and symbolism in worship. Plain rooms and bare walls, ornate pulpit furniture, utter absence of ritual, all spoke of a lack of taste. Even in the classrooms of children religious art was long represented by gaudy prints and mottoes before pictures of finer quality were hung on the walls. Not much before the twentieth century did churches here and there awake to the desirability of improved architecture and appoint architects for churches that were teachable.

Music has a peculiarly inspiring ministry, but the kind of music in vogue was very limited in scope and quality. The first product of an American printing press was the Bay Psalm Book. The Puritans valued the Old

Testament Psalter and used metrical versions in their worship. Watts's hymns enlivened the praise service, a real advance over the psalm singing of an earlier time. Presently a revival hymnody introduced the copious writings of Charles Wesley. His hymns reflected the feelings of warm-hearted people and gained wide popularity in other denominations as well as in his own Methodist fellowship. These spiritual songs were followed by large numbers of revivalistic verses and melodies published under the title of gospel songs or hymns, chiefly the product of the Moody and Sankey period; these had great vogue for a generation but failed to prove their lasting quality. These were the songs that were in common use in prayer meetings. In Sunday worship more dignified hymns culled from ancient and modern writers and composers, usually by denominational editors acting under the auspices of a denominational publishing house, were in use. Hymns that had a universal appeal and music that touched a common chord of emotion were adopted and sometimes adapted to the use of liberal or orthodox congregations without much regard to their denominational origin. The hymn book next to the Bible was the religious storehouse of all Christians. The character of the hymns corresponded to the character of American religion. Far more of personal aspiration than of social need was in them. Didactic theology cropped out now and again. Hortatory urging of God and men to activity was common. The social aspects of religion were conspicuously absent. But with the passing of the sterner theology and the broadening of human sympathy came a new note of passionate longing for a common share in the best that God could give.

The musical setting of the hymns was frequently an adaptation from secular tunes. In the nineteenth century certain original composers were popular and produced melodies and harmonies that could be sung easily by an ordinary congregation. Later more ambitious compos-



ers wrote a musical notation that was more intricate in character, and congregational singing gave way in many churches to choirs and paid quartettes. The rendering of church music became more artistic, in some cases furnishing more sensuous enjoyment than incentive to worship. The untrained congregation turned sometimes with relief to the ragtime melodies of popular song books, except in those churches where an effort was made to bring the people to an appreciation of the less simple but more beautiful hymns and anthems of high musical quality.

Literature made its contribution to religion. Sermons and theological treatises were published in an appeal to the intellect, missionary and Sunday school literature for specific ecclesiastical purposes, religious history and biography for those who were interested in such subjects. These contributed only indirectly to spiritualize religion. Much of the devotional literature that found its way into print a century ago was open to the criticism of being sentimental and morbid. The fiction of the Sunday school libraries was not of high grade. Gradually a healthier sort of literature was discovered to be more stimulating to true spirituality. The output of religious books argues that the religious interest of the American people does not decline. The secular newspapers and periodicals have opened their columns to discussions of both theoretical and practical religion.

No kind of American literature so appeals to the spirit as does poetry. Its message is to the heart rather than to the intellect, yet the basic beliefs in God and Christ, in life and death and the beyond are strengthened by the poet's stanzas. The American poets have contributed their faith and hope to the enrichment of spiritual experience. The strong faith of Walt Whitman in the validity of the soul, Emerson's confidence in God, Whittier's trust in his mercy and loving kindness, Bryant's dependence upon his power, were all props in the time of doubt and fear and distress. The poets differed in their interpretations of

Christ, but in their attitude towards him they were reverential and willing to accept his leadership. They pondered the mysteries of life, but they accepted its worth, and they believed in a life to come. The popular poets that were read at the fireside and memorized and recited in school were poets of confident faith and hope and aspiration, and as such were preachers of religion and ministers to a spiritual quality in that religion.

American religion has had its quietists, practising meditation and prayer, finding God in the "quiet hour." It has had its exponents of the simple life and of asceticism, urging the abandonment of fripperies and frivolities for the good of the soul. It has had its sentimentalists who devoured memoirs of child saints or devotional books of a morbid character. It has had in recent years a healthier religious literature, like Fosdick's trilogy on the meaning of faith, prayer and service. It has had its saints of the cloister and saints in the market place and saints on Sunday in the church. With all its handicaps religion has kept its spiritual essence.

Slowly a clearer appreciation has come of the meaning of spiritual religion. It has degenerated easily into sentimentalism because it plays on the emotions and kindles the imagination. It chills upon too close contact with intellectual arguments. It loses its bloom in the rough buffetings of the market place. It has had to struggle to keep itself sane and pure. As men have thought and studied and experienced, they have discovered that spiritual religion consists first in a consciousness of God, not as an objective truth but as a subjective reality that enters into human life, a part of the warp and woof of human personality. This consciousness has given understanding and power and has motivated religious action. It has supplied the inspiration, the volition that has eventuated in prayer, worship, and revival effort. It has created the prophet and sanctified the priest.

Unprejudiced students of religion came to see that

spiritual religion has greater values in character than in the production of transient phenomena of a purely emotional sort. The shouting of the exhorter, the physical extravagances of the Holy Roller, the dancing of the Shaker, the pious professions of the colored brother who might steal chickens on occasion, were rightly appraised as phylacteries on the garments of religion, not its naked substance. The churches in America have been revaluing the religion of their members, demanding a finer moral texture in Christian life, testing profession of religion by the known character of the professor. Holy unction has come to rank below the quiet, inconspicuous service of every-day saints. A non-ecclesiastical religion that is born of the consciousness of an indwelling God and that fruits in character and conduct has compelled recognition. Church religion is at a discount in comparison in some quarters, not that the church has ceased its usefulness and will not recover, even in unfortunate local complications, its spiritual solvency, but the estimate of religion is changing.

This revaluation of religion has been peculiarly effective in the colleges. There inquiring minds are searching for reality. With their enrichment of the understanding by science and history and literature they probe the profounder truths that underlie philosophy and religion. They think in the classroom and talk about it in the quiet conversation that sometimes happens among close friends. The college student hates a sham. He is impatient with unreality. He is prospecting for truth. The trappings of ecclesiasticism are liable to repel him. The conventional sermon or book palls upon him. But he responds to the preacher who gives him a fresh interpretation, or to the prophet who shows him a vision of life worth while, because it is lived in the consciousness of God and under the push of noble impulse. The college student is not abnormal, but he is supercritical and super-sensitive. He commonly loses his inherited religion,

but as frequently finds one that suits him far better and that has the quality of spirituality that consecrates life.

The interest in the real meaning of religion that touched the student seized upon the teacher. The professor of natural science discovered that evolution could not be explained by the struggle with tooth and claw, but that the protective instinct of the mother animal saved her offspring again and again, and mutual aid in the flock or the herd made the individual members able to survive. If it is so among animals, it is truer still as a principle among humans. At that point the social scientist made his contribution. He discovered that the qualities of kindness and sympathy and affection ruled in the primary groups of the family, the clan, and the neighborhood among those who attained to civilization, and he was honest enough to admit that the principles of reconciliation and love and service that are so basic in the teaching of Jesus, yet were discounted by many persons as impracticable, were thoroughly sound as sociological principles and necessary for the solution of present day social problems and for future social evolution.

The professor of philosophy wrought out a psychology of religion. It analyzed the religious nature of man, tested and valued his religious experiences, studied the aims and methods of organized religion from the point of view of their contribution to personal and social religion, and fastened its hold upon the art of religious education in determined fashion. Through the Religious Education Association, that was organized in the belief that the methods of religious training, especially in the Sunday school, could be greatly improved, the study of the psychology of religion was popularized. Normal courses for teachers in the subject of child study were arranged in conjunction with courses in pedagogy. Ministers began to read books on the subject, and theological seminaries to add it to their curriculum. Convictions deepened that religion must be taught to young people more sensibly

and more effectively. Week-day sessions of church schools were arranged, vacation Bible schools started, and revolutionary methods introduced into the Sunday schools. It was perceived that a boy's religion is not the same as that of his mother, that a college girl's experience is not that of a minister, and that religious teaching should take the differences into account. It developed that young people of the church societies needed less introspection and more social expression. The possibilities of the future unfolding of the whole subject of religion began to be glimpsed, and the psychology of religion promised valuable contributions.

Standing in the way of all progressive thought was the inertia of ecclesiastical bodies. Always a fear that the values in the old ideas would be discounted made churches cautious about welcoming new interpretations. Vested interests in the sphere of religious education contended for their ancient rights. The Bible might lose its prestige or a conservative theology might have to yield its hold upon the church mind. Ministers and teachers educated in the older conceptions of religion and accustomed to existing methods resisted change. Those whose sympathies were evangelistic saw an error if not a danger in the new emphasis on education. After two decades of the twentieth century the progress of the new is gaining in rapidity, but its future speed is problematical.

In one respect, at least, the conservative deserved the attention of those who were impatient with his reactionary disposition. He knew that there were values to be conserved in the old thinking. He knew that the old message of the pulpits had stirred hearts that were callous and seared, that the old theology and the religious education stressed ideas, as of sin and penalty and justice, that were as real and as necessary as mercy and forgiveness and love, and that religion cannot grow and bear fruit without storm and cold as well as dew and sunshine. The conservative believed, too, that the modernist was too



well satisfied with the intellectual products of the schools, and too scornful of the intuitions and feelings of the saints in Israel. They held that the things that had always and everywhere been believed were more valuable than the most enlightened or clever thinking of minds that were pioneering on their own account.

The conservative charged the modernist with stressing the social applications of religion until the personal relation of the individual to God, which is the essence of all religion, was obscured. The conservative knew that there were depths and reaches of personal experience that could not be plumbed by a religion that centered in the idea of social service.

The forms, traditions, and conventions that seemed so important to the conservatives meant relatively little to the modernists. The authority of such things was mediæval. They were far more concerned with the realities that lay back of externals than with theological statements. To them the issue with which religion was vitally concerned was the issue with a materialistic philosophy. Was the spiritual truly real, or could it be that the material was all that counted? In the long perspective of the centuries would character and service be appraised most highly, or was it enough to observe the forms and go through the gestures of religion, devoted at heart to the pursuit of the things of time and sense? To emphasize a traditional theology or a particular form of creed or organization or ordinance was to confess that the traditional and material are essential to religion, and so to strengthen the contentions of the materialistic philosopher. But a materialistic age like this cannot be reconstructed after the fashion of the kingdom of God without an emphasis upon the transcendent value of a proper perspective in life's purpose and a consecration of personality to God and to the service of human kind, at the cost of a sacrifice of lower interests to higher, when necessary.

Naturally, each group in the church was impatient with

the other. The conservative blamed the liberal for giving up hard won victories of ancient truth for vague generalities. The modernist was impatient with a conservatism that blocked his path with ancient monuments, whether organizations or creeds. Shibboleths, war cries, denominational fences, were but ecclesiastical trappings that obscured the vital truth of spiritual experience. They were of the material that perishes; it is the spiritual only that endures.

The modernist took as a spiritual norm the life of Jesus. New accounts and interpretations of that life came from the presses of publishers, and confirmed him in the conviction that the chief function of the Christian religion is to interpret and reproduce the matchless life and teaching of Jesus. Certain modernists failed to realize that it was not sufficient merely to furnish an understanding of the life and teaching. More of them knew that the dynamic of the personality of Jesus must transfuse the spirit of the disciple, that it must keep in contact with the creative energy of God, must give him such spiritual vigor that he would be able to meet the emergencies of life, and daily to practice service and self-denial for the sake of others than himself. Inspiration as well as interpretation was essential to religious progress.

Both schools agreed that to spiritualize religion was to release reservoirs of power for a thirsty age. Multitudes of people were getting along with substitutes for the water of life that were not satisfying to the deepest needs. The restlessness so apparent both before and after the World War, the eager search for satisfactions on the lower physical level, the impatience with religious cults that served only an adulterated spiritual mixture, were all evidences that human nature craves a spiritual religion. There was a growing consensus of belief in a religion that is rooted in a firm consciousness of God and faith in him; in an experience of communion with

him that is not merely a glowing ecstasy of the soul, but eventuates in life; that is dynamic in producing faith and righteousness in an imperfect, misunderstanding world that needs these elements of character; and that functions through a church that is consecrated to the real spirit as well as name of Jesus Christ.

## XI. THE CHURCHES

RELIGION in America has been less dependent on ecclesiastical organization than in other countries, but its normal expression has been through the church. In the absence of state churches since colonial times religion has been free to find outlet in individual probity without profession of religion, in humanitarian service, in art and literature, but in proportion as individuals have responded to the religious impulse they have been drawn into the churches as the organized expression of religious purpose. Customarily they joined the denomination of their parents; occasionally belief in a distinctive principle represented by another church, or the special attraction of a minister or a form of worship, attracted elsewhere. It was good form to attend church, even if one had no strong interest in religion, but gradually such an act of courtesy ceased to be necessary to social standing.

Personal allegiance was primarily to the local church. It was visible and convenient, and there were concrete values in neighborhood association. Loyalty to the denomination was felt keenly by Catholics, Episcopalians, and Lutherans; among more loosely organized groups the local church satisfied the sense of loyalty. The Episcopalian meant by the church the orderly organization that had been transmitted through centuries from ancient ecclesiasticism; the Disciple thought of the church as the organization of local members gathering regularly in the meeting house for such forms of worship as seemed right and expedient. He believed in the one church of God as an ideal, but the local church satisfied his present need.

The baptismal font or baptistery was the gate of

entrance into the church. Baptism was administered to infant children on the responsibility of parents or god-parents by ministers of most denominations, and the children were expected to qualify for responsible church membership when they came to years of discretion. Baptist churches and their kin, which did not practice infant baptism, won adults to willing confession of faith and entrance into the church, and hoped through Sunday school and home training to produce proper spiritual qualifications in the children so that they might qualify in their youth for church membership through baptism. At regular intervals the Lord's Supper, or eucharist, was administered in the churches to the members present. Except to a few like the Quakers these sacraments, or ordinances, seemed of binding significance. Discussion sometimes raged over times and modes of observance, but there was little question that the observance was obligatory.

Those who did not yield to spiritual impulses or ecclesiastical invitations could not escape the influence of the church in the community. The mere presence of a meeting house in a village or at the crossroads was a constant reminder of human obligations and an incentive to idealism. Those who permitted themselves to listen to evangelistic preaching occasionally were likely to be pricked in conscience as they pondered their religious obligations; others became "gospel-hardened" by resisting successfully the evangelistic appeals of the weekly pulpit. In less emotional gatherings the quiet influence of the ritual service and the harmonious surroundings stirred the best impulses of the soul, dissipated though they might be through the lack of any focal point of voluntary decision. Each church had its own modes of worship and methods of appeal, and among them men and women of all sorts and conditions found spiritual satisfaction.

As the churches differed in their mode of worship and



manner of appeal, and in their qualifications for membership, so they differed in organization. These differences were partly a matter of temperament but mainly the result of European inheritance. All churches provided in their local organization for both spiritual and corporate leadership. The clergyman was treated with marked respect. In Catholic and Episcopal churches he was dignified by his ordination at the will of the historic episcopate and by his appropriate vestments. The Anglican clergyman in the colonies was popular for his good fellowship socially rather than because of any homiletic ability, but with the strong development of the Protestant Episcopal church he came to have a weight of social influence that was unsurpassed by any other communion. The Puritan minister, whether Presbyterian or Congregational, felt himself a man of authority by virtue of the grace of God rather than by his ordination or his Geneva gown and bands. He was ordained more democratically by presbytery or advisory council, but he regarded himself as divinely commissioned to proclaim the will of God. His voice in the pulpit was to the people as well as to himself the voice of God's ambassador, and in town affairs as well as in the church he was often an oracle. He combined in himself the offices of priest and prophet and pastor, and his serious demeanor and correct deportment commanded universal respect. With the relaxation of Puritanism the minister ceased naturally to seem so much like a demigod, but he was still a "divine" in the thought and language of the people.

The more democratic churches chose their own ministers, inviting them from other pulpits, or ordaining them for their first pastorates. It was the custom for a minister to remain with a church many years, sometimes for life. In such a case he built himself into the life of a community, baptizing the children, marrying and counseling with those who bore the burdens of middle life, and burying the aged, until he endeared himself to his

whole parish. Lay deacons—among Presbyterians deacons and elders—assisted the minister in the spiritual leadership of the parish and administered ecclesiastical charity. Methodism introduced the useful class leader, religious censor and inspirer of the small group, and demonstrated clearly the value of the laity. Among Episcopalians and Methodists ministers were appointed by the higher clergy, who took into consideration the wishes of the local church. Vestrymen and wardens attended to the business affairs, as did the stewards in the Methodist churches.

No lengthy official roster was printed on church calendars. The days of Sunday schools, women's and young people's societies and numerous committees was not yet. They all came in the nineteenth century, but the earlier organization of the churches of all kinds was simple. All local questions were settled in Congregational and Baptist churches by the church itself, aided on occasion by a special council of delegates from neighboring churches invited to give advice on a specific local problem. Episcopalians and Presbyterians committed the management of local affairs to a smaller group than the congregation, and recognized the authority of higher regional courts as soon as they had been brought into existence on the Old World model. The organization, like the worship, of the Catholic churches continued after the pattern of the European system of Rome.

It was difficult, even for Protestant churches in America, to escape from the obsession that the clergy constituted a class apart, with distinct privileges and with functions that could not be performed properly by the laity. The Episcopal churches were compelled to use lay readers in order to hold services of worship in the South in colonial days, because ordained ministers were few. When Methodists undertook to evangelize the rural regions of America, it was necessary for them to use the lay exhorter and to depend on the class leader as a kind of

assistant minister. Presbyterians were reluctant to permit any but trained ministers to preach. Nevertheless laymen asserted their rights in the business management of churches of various denominations, and after a time pressed for larger recognition. They secured representation in the national assemblies of the churches, filled important places on committees, and by and by came to occupy the highest offices. Towards the end of the nineteenth century lay movements came into vogue, even in the Catholic church, arousing interest in missions and social service, and stimulating loyalty to the church and generosity towards its enterprises. Laymen took part in evangelism as members of deputations, speakers at shop meetings, and helpers and organizers in large evangelistic campaigns. They organized men's classes in Sunday schools and brotherhoods in local churches and throughout a denomination. In the Unitarian fellowship they set in motion a progressive campaign that rejuvenated the denomination. In the future their religious activity promises to be essential in all departments of church life.

The rôle of women in the religious history of America never has been estimated. Under the ban of silence in the churches from before the time when Anne Hutchinson aroused the ire of the men of Puritan Boston until late in the nineteenth century, they played a noble part in the maintenance of religion. It was the mothers who taught their children the rudiments of religion in the home, sent them to church and Sunday school, taught them in the classrooms, and sent them out into the world shielded by their prayers. It was the wives of ministers who sustained their courage, censored their sermons, aided them in pastoral service, and kept the home on a pecuniary allowance that was often pitifully small. Women were frequently the mainstay of the small churches. They raised money for church purposes by personal sacrifice and uncomplaining service. They almost alone made any contribution to the social life of

the church. They constituted the largest part of church membership. They were the most regular attendants at the appointed meetings of the church. They were organized in mission circles for encouraging and contributing to missions from the beginnings of the missionary enterprise, and they went as missionaries to the fields of activity. They were the burden bearers of religion. Not until they received social and political recognition were they welcomed to general positions of ecclesiastical responsibility, but that privilege and responsibility was met efficiently when the opportunity came.

Young people in the churches have occupied a similar position of subordination. They furnished subjects of discussion in the polemics over infant baptism; they were drilled in the catechisms of the several faiths; they were the objects of father's counsels and mother's prayers. They were the chief consideration in the organization of Sunday schools, and when they grew to maturity they became in their turn teachers and leaders in the church, if they had a spirit of consecration, gifts of leadership, or a will to be active and prominent. But as a class, until they reached years of manhood and womanhood they were expected to walk humbly in the sanctuary. As the churches escaped gradually from the thralldom of conservative ideas and methods ministers began to see possibilities of usefulness in the young people. They possessed open minds, energy, latent capacity for abundant service. They were encouraged to meet together as a group and to assume the leadership in such meetings. Then Francis E. Clark, a Congregational minister in Portland, Maine, organized a society of Christian endeavor in his own church on the basis of a pledge to attend and participate in the meetings of the organization. So timely was the event that within a few months similar societies sprang up all over the country in the various denominations, to unite shortly in a united Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. Within a few years other



denominations than the Congregationalists felt it desirable to corral their own young people into denominational organizations, but the movement gave a tremendous impetus to young people's activity in the churches and to an interdenominational spirit. In the judgment of many Christian leaders the young people's organizations were too self-centered and needed more avenues of religious expression, but their potential worth both to the young people and to the churches received generous recognition.

Most local churches were slow to appreciate the value of a larger denominational unity, as were the American people until after the Revolution. The spirit of independence so characteristic of local towns and colleges created a fear or jealousy of outside authority and an obstruction of the free spirit that moved in the heart of Protestantism. In New England the experiment of colonial synods did not result in permanent associations among the Congregational churches, though their ministers organized and enjoyed such associations among themselves. In 1707 the Baptists organized a group of churches into the Philadelphia Association, following the example of their English fellow believers. It was nearly fifty years before a similar organization was effected in South Carolina, and sixty years before the experiment was tried in New England, and then only four churches could be induced to join. The Associations served as a bond of fellowship and a reminder of a denominational connection. On occasion they stiffened the resistance of the dissenting churches to the established church, and in course of time they became agencies of evangelism, but they lacked sufficient functions to keep them very useful. An Association normally had in its membership from ten or twelve to twenty churches, each of which sent its pastor and lay delegates to an annual meeting, which provided spiritual stimulus and an opportunity to discuss topics of common interest.

The influence of tradition led to a more closely knit



organization among both Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The Church of England had inherited the bishop and his diocese from the church of Rome. No Episcopal organization could be regarded as satisfactory without the diocesan machinery. The Anglican policy prevented the consecration of any American bishop during the colonial period, but as soon as the Episcopal churches of America had recovered from the Revolution a convention was held, an ecclesiastical constitution prepared, and the necessary steps taken to secure the consecration of bishops overseas. As rapidly as possible the complete machinery of the church was put in order, heading up in the General Convention which meets triennially. Presbyterians organized a district presbytery the year before the Baptists inaugurated their association, and as Presbyterian territory increased grouped presbyteries in a synod. Ultimately after the Revolution synods were bound together in a General Assembly with legislative authority over the churches. The Presbyterian church in America bore the stamp of its Scotch origin, and did not forget the discipline of Calvin at Geneva.

Other denominations approximated the organization of these four. When the Methodists emerged from the obscurity of their small beginnings in the years following the Revolution, they preserved the episcopal organization of the Anglican church out of which they had come, but appointed their bishops by authority of a General Conference of the churches meeting quadrennially, and assigned them territory temporarily instead of giving them diocesan authority in perpetuity. Local churches had their quarterly conferences directed by presiding elders, later called district superintendents. Ministers met in annual conference, where assignments were made to pastorates. Methodists believed in an itinerant ministry, and until within recent years made pastoral assignments for a brief term only.

The Reformed churches, both Dutch and German, were

presbyterian in their organization. In common with Scotch Presbyterians and English Puritans they had received their denominational impress from Geneva, and had kept the Calvinistic polity as well as theology, which the New England Congregationalists had abandoned. During colonial times both groups looked for guidance to the classis of Amsterdam, but organized separately as American denominations after the independence of the colonists was secured. The strength of both bodies lay in the eastern part of the country, where most of the Dutch and Germans settled. Later immigration sent a considerable number into the Middle West, and some of their congregations continued to use the Dutch language and the European liturgy. Many of the German folk also went to the West where their Lutheran countrymen became numerous, but the strength of the German Reformed church remained in Pennsylvania, where most of them had settled in colonial days.

Lutherans had no fixed form of local organization in Europe, and they kept their mixed polity in America. A few Lutherans had accompanied the Dutch to the original colony of New Amsterdam, but their initial colony was the Swedish settlement on the Delaware river. Not until the eighteenth century was a Lutheran church organized in the colony of Pennsylvania, which became the home of German Lutherans in colonial America. There was a tendency of Germans of different faiths to draw together, and they might have merged their differences had not Henry M. Muhlenberg stimulated the Lutheran consciousness and given the people more definite corporate organization. He assisted in organizing a Lutheran synod in Pennsylvania in 1748, and thus gave coherence to the whole body.

In the nineteenth century Lutheranism gained great accession of strength from European immigration. Both Germans and Scandinavians poured into the upper Mississippi valley and beyond into the Northwest until the

churches in the interior were twice as many as in the East. Lutherans differed in nationality and in language; some of them were stricter than others in their adherence to the formulas of faith that had come out of the sixteenth century, but all alike revered Martin Luther and jealously guarded the faith and customs that they had brought with them from the Fatherland. Later decades added the Finns to the Lutheran nationalities in America. A solidifying process in recent years has united most of the Lutheran synods into a united Lutheran denomination, and Lutherans of all sorts constitute a strong body of more than two million members.

About the beginning of the nineteenth century another denomination of German origin came into existence, influenced by the Methodist movement and organizing itself after the Methodist pattern. It took the name of United Brethren. Certain Mennonite and German Reformed ministers had a share in originating the new body, and it was among German-speaking people that the organization gained adherents, but their doctrines were Arminian rather than Lutheran, and class leaders, itinerant preachers, and bishops gave a Methodist cast to the denominational features. With some dissensions the denomination grew to respectable size, and had a leavening influence among the people of German descent in America.

Few churches with any form of organization won greater popularity than the Disciples of Christ. Their organizer was Alexander Campbell, son of an Irish Presbyterian minister. In Pennsylvania, where the family settled early in the nineteenth century, changing opinions about baptism carried Campbell into Baptist affiliation, but like Roger Williams he was not content to remain in the new connection. Friction developed because Campbell expressed peculiar opinions, and presently he was organizing his followers, popularly dubbed Campbellites, into a new Christian group. Quite independently other

small groups had seceded from Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist connections in that period when religion was in flux, and under the impulse of the belief that denominational divisions were wrong, and that as far as possible all Christians should return to the teaching and practice of the early church, designated themselves simply as Christians. Campbell's movement drew to itself most of these Christians, and in spite of the general opposition to denominationalism they became a new denomination of Disciples. Those who did not join with the Campbellites united in the "Christian Connection."

The Disciples adopted a congregational polity, organizing both locally and nationally much like Baptists and Congregationalists. They made a remarkable growth, drawing from the Baptists and becoming a leading denomination in the Middle West. They did not lose sight of their ideal of Christian union. In 1910 they organized an Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity, and through their religious weekly, the *Christian Century*, leaders of the Disciples added their contribution to the common cause which was being promoted by the *Outlook*, the *Independent*, the *Christian Herald*, and *Christian Work*.

Out of the period of free experimentation in the organization of American churches emerged three distinct types of denominations: the congregational, which reserved to the local church or congregation the right of ecclesiastical control, a democratic polity practiced by Congregationalists, Baptists, Disciples, and a number of smaller groups; the presbyterian, which selected representatives of the local churches and gave them authority over local bodies, including Presbyterians and the Reformed churches, Dutch and German; and the episcopal, which recognized the bishop as endowed with rightful administrative authority and found in a general conference or convention scope for denominational legislation, a type represented by the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal churches.

In spite of certain family likenesses in polity and belief the American churches tended to disintegrate, throwing off diverging branches because of minor differences or sectional grievances. This was the tendency up to the Civil War. After that time they tended towards integration, and efforts at reunion began to show promise. Certain large bodies were conspicuously successful in preserving unity. The Catholics were able to do it by the careful education of their children and by the exercise of ecclesiastical authority when any inclination appeared to assert independence. The Episcopalians allowed diversities of opinion in unessentials and so were able to hold together almost without secession High and Low and Broad churchmen. These communions presented object lessons of the value of unity.

The nineteenth century opened a wider vista to the ecclesiastical imagination of the congregationally organized churches. A new consciousness of the responsibility that lay on all Christians to be of service to their fellowmen led to the formation of missionary societies and humanitarian organizations. This new sense of a common interest produced more closely knit organizations. First in state assemblies and then in national councils those free churches effected their regional organizations. Eleven years after the Congregationalists had organized their American Board for missions they created in Massachusetts their first local conference of churches, and five years later in Maine their first state association. Baptists in Massachusetts had organized their first state convention twenty years earlier. In 1852 and again at the close of the Civil War general assemblies of Congregationalists from all over the country met and discussed their mutual interests. All these culminated in 1871 in the organization of the National Council "to express and foster their substantial unity in doctrine, polity, and work; and to consult upon the common interests of all churches, their duties in the work of evangelization, the united development of their



resources and their relations to all parts of the kingdom of Christ." Delegates, both lay and ministerial, represented the churches. The experiment has worked well. Fifty years of experience with the National Council convinced most Congregationalists, for example, that it has great value as a clearing-house of opinion and a rallying point of denominational interests. The appointment of a moderator and a general secretary in recent years, men who visit the churches and confer with pastors, is a development that is indicative of closer relations than formerly among Congregational churches, not to say of an approach to denominational oversight of the churches.

Along the same road but more slowly moved the Baptists. When the division arose over the slavery issue Southern Baptists organized their interests in a Southern Baptist Convention, but in the North their ecclesiastical kin continued to be satisfied with their associations and state conventions and the three voluntary societies that had the care of foreign and home missions and Sunday school interests. With the opening of the twentieth century an increasing conviction spread that the various enterprises of the denomination should be coördinated, the unity and efficiency of the churches should be stimulated, and the denominational mind have an opportunity to express itself on moral and religious issues. After considerable agitation and discussion the Northern Baptist Convention was provisionally organized (1907), and the organization was ratified by the churches and made permanent the next year. In the organization the constitutional convention adopted resolutions declaring adherence to the principle of the independence of the local church and the advisory and representative character of the district associations and state conventions, but affirming at the same time the conviction that a general body was needed to minister to the common interests of the denomination.

The evolution of congregationalism as a church polity has been from the simple to the complex, and from the

local to the national and even international organization. Based on the principle of the self-government of the local church with no definite relation to other churches, except as the occasion demanded an advisory council, the Congregational and Baptist denominations, and similarly Disciples, Adventists, and Unitarians, have come to include widely diverging agencies closely related in organization and becoming continually more coöperative, all finding a common head in a national body. Congregationalism has many points in common with American political and social organization. It has learned to combine flexibility with permanency, and tries to adjust local autonomy to efficient national leadership. The Congregational churches have easily become community churches because they adapt themselves most readily to the needs of all sorts of Christian people.

No denomination showed greater vigor and efficiency than the Methodist church. From a later beginning than the other large religious bodies of America it came to have the largest membership among the Protestants. It had a coherence that was lacking to the more loosely organized groups. Its local churches were under careful oversight, bound together in district conferences with district superintendents in charge, every region of the country administered by a bishop, and the whole brought into unity of action in the General Conference that meets quadrennially. Though at first Methodists depended to a great degree on lay leaders and preachers, a few of the ordained ministers enjoyed the advantages of theological training and the standards of the ministry were steadily raised, colleges and seminaries were multiplied, and ministers were kept up to pitch by means of the annual conferences and required courses of reading. Methodists were first to undertake a forward movement for greater efficiency and to raise a large sum of money to finance it, when the World War compelled the churches to face their mighty tasks. Their centenary movement included in its plan a rapid

expansion of the missionary and rural enterprises of the denomination, appropriated millions of dollars to hospitals, institutional churches, industrial and immigrant centers, seven millions each for strategic urban and suburban parishes, for downtown evangelistic centers, and for education in foreign lands, and millions more for new and remodeled buildings in foreign mission territory. On so huge a scale were religious organizations able to make budgets and plan enlargements.

Denominational loyalty was strongest in the South. In that section people lived almost entirely out in the country, and country folk tend to conservatism. So it was that they took religion as they found it, not interested in questions of theology or biblical criticism, nor stressing the application of religion to life, but certain that their brand of religion was better than any other. Baptists had the largest numbers, Methodists a powerful influence. Both of these groups had separated from their Northern kin and organized independently, continuing to carry on their missionary and educational interests. During the sectional conflict of slavery their absorbing interest was the war, but men like Stonewall Jackson carried their religion into the camp and stood publicly for Christian faith and conduct. After the failure of the Confederacy it took time to recover, but more recent years have seen fresh enthusiasm in the churches, the construction of worthier ecclesiastical structures, and an increased appreciation of religious training, especially for ministers.

Negro churches have most needed educated leadership. Millions of negroes belong to colored Baptist and Methodist churches, which attracted them after they withdrew from the churches of their masters, to which in many cases they had belonged. Little educated, they never got rid of all the superstitions of their African ancestry, and their religion expressed itself on the emotional level. Too often negro church members were guilty of moral lapses and they found it difficult to put their religion into life. Their

churches were the social centers of the people; most of their recreation as well as worship centered there. As they grew prosperous in their independence they were able to contribute to the support of negro schools and other social institutions, and they learned to form associations for mutual aid and uplift. Northern home missionary societies gave them aid, and Southern states shared educational funds with colored citizens.

Consolidation of organization and enlarged and co-ordinated plans were necessary in every denomination because of the multiplication of ecclesiastical machines. Missionary societies and Sunday schools became general among the churches. Educational and charitable interests had to be taken care of. All these had to be related to one another, for each organization tended to overemphasize its own importance and privileges. Even church buildings felt the effects of the new societies. Episcopal parish houses became common in the larger centers, leaving the church structure unchanged for its purely religious purposes, but other denominations adapted their meeting houses to a greater variety of uses. Basements that had been used for prayer meetings were given over in part to dining room and kitchen and ladies' parlor for the women's gatherings and church sociables. When possible chapels were thrown out as a wing of the building, quarters were provided for Sunday school classrooms, and a suitable room for the mid-week meetings of the church. Where money was plentiful and good taste had the choosing of an architect, church buildings were erected that were a credit to the church and community. The severe simplicity of Puritanism gave way to softer outlines and minor tones, and the play of lights and shadows upon frescoed walls through stained glass windows. Music lent itself to the moods of the worshipers. Sermons and prayers were adapted to the occasion and shortened to their proper place in a service that never lasted more than two hours and usually less. The minister lost his

authority, but in proportion as he kept in contact with the people of his parish through his ministrations and in touch with the thought of his day through his studies he held a place of dignity and influence in his church and community.

It was inevitable that the Protestant churches should lose relatively their commanding position, as immigration brought millions of Catholics and Jews into the country, and as changing ideas about the relative value of religion and science drew many away from the churches to follow other gods. Especially was this the case among educated young people when the churches with which they would have kept affiliation were hostile to everything that was new and different from the tradition in which they trusted. New ideas were broadcasted by the press, and the uninstructed crowd caught quickly the significance of the changes that were going on. Relaxation of the authority of religious tradition made it easier for the self-indulgent to quiet or sear their consciences, and presently more people were staying at home from church, and refusing to respond to the most persuasive urgings of church evangelists. To win the multitude certain ministers adopted sensational methods, advertising striking topics and attempting methods and poses to arouse curiosity and discussion. Such efforts made little lasting impression. Other ministers organized clubs and threw open the doors of their churches every day or evening, and through their institutional methods were able to enlist new recruits and do them good, if the church did not lose its sense of relative values and forget that its primary function was religious. Meantime a majority of churches steadily maintained their customary services, practiced a sane evangelism, and added to their strength in spite of the indifference of thousands of persons in every large community.

Rapid as was the growth of population in the United States growth of membership in the churches was more



rapid. The official religious census of 1890 credited Catholics with 6,258,000 members, Methodists with 4,598,000, and Baptists with 3,718,000. Presbyterians and Lutherans each had about a million and a quarter. Sixteen years later Catholics had increased to approximately 10,637,000, Methodists to 5,311,000, and Baptists 5,344,000. Sixteen years later still, in 1922, figures published by the Federal Council of Churches gave approximately to Roman Catholics 18,260,000, Methodists 8,262,289, Baptists 8,167,535, Lutherans 2,515,000, Presbyterians 2,402,000, Disciples and Protestant Episcopalians more than a million each, and Congregationalists 838,000, with a grand total of all Protestant bodies of more than twenty-seven millions. The value of ecclesiastical property and the amount of benevolent contributions increased in proportion.

The greatest handicaps to church efficiency were insufficiently trained ministers and Sunday school teachers, the conservative attitude of the rank and file among church people towards new methods, and excessive denominationalism. In a number of the denominations the proportion of uneducated ministers was far too large. If a zealous young man had ready utterance and showed himself to be of pious disposition, he was encouraged to go into the ministry, and many churches preferred the zeal of such a one to the thoughtful discourses of a product of the schools. Those who went through college caught something of the scientific spirit and method, but the new had not penetrated into the theological seminaries much before the beginning of the twentieth century, except in the classrooms of a few liberal-minded professors. The newer disciplines of social science, especially psychology and sociology, had not yet found room. Certain ministers who caught the new social spirit did not know how to apply it in their churches because they had not been trained. The new psychology and pedagogy came to the teachers in the Sunday schools later still.

The church mind, like the legal mind, is notoriously conservative. In the region of ideas conservatism was to be expected of those who regarded revelation as a fixed deposit, but in group methods American people were trying new ways of doing things, and the church would have gained from a greater degree of experimenting in efficiency. It seemed as if the past had set its sanction upon certain ways of procedure, and what was good for the fathers was too good to be sacrificed to the novel methods of the children. The old ways of building churches, of choosing ministers and church officials, of teaching in the Sunday school, of conducting prayer meetings, of raising money, of observing special church days, of meeting in associations and conventions, of renting church pews, of conducting church funerals, were preserved when methods and machinery were changing on the farm and in the factory and life was moving at accelerated speed along every avenue of activity. The period was not without its gains in new organizations, but too often new organizations were added when new methods of using the old would have been better. Finally excessive loyalty to denominationalism was a severe handicap against which increasing protest was being made.

## XII. TENDENCIES TOWARD UNITY

THE disintegration of church unity which had followed the sixteenth century revolt from Catholicism had spent itself in America almost completely by the time of the Civil War. Small groups came into existence occasionally on the basis of a special tenet regarding second adventism or ethical culture or other matter of absorbing interest to a certain few, but Christian Scientists constituted the only new group of any size organized after 1865. Denominationalism was still a prominent feature of American ecclesiasticism, but wordy wrangling had ceased generally.

The disposition to multiply unnecessarily the number of local churches was the bane of small communities, though such duplication of effort was expensive financially, and local church rivalries were bad for the disposition. Such duplication and rivalry were not confined to churches. Parallel railroads were built. There was cutthroat competition in business. Benevolent fraternities of many names overcrowded country towns with their lodges. Third parties and fifth wheels of all kinds cluttering the political and social highways were evidences of the individualism and group differentiation that were so characteristic of the American people. Nothing better could be expected in religion, especially when each denomination believed that its own type of religion was better than any other.

The time came when competition became so keen as to force consolidation of organizations. Railroads became reorganized into trunk lines and systems. Giant corporations absorbed the smaller fry in business. District

schools were merged into large central plants. Churches could not escape the influence of the new time spirit. The disposition to magnify differences gave way to an inclination to find likenesses. A growing consciousness of large common tasks made possible a more reasonable attitude of tolerance and comity and mutual understanding, and banished the acuteness of strife over doctrine or polity.

The first evidence of common religious interest appeared in the revivals of the eighteenth century. The English evangelist, Whitefield, was not a partisan in religion, and he summoned sinners to repentance from a Congregational pulpit as willingly as he spoke in a sanctuary of the Episcopal church of his fathers. On occasion he preached out-of-doors. The thrill of religious interest stirred the countryside. People of all creeds flocked to hear him and the evangelists who itinerated after him. New members were gathered into various denominational bodies. The Great Awakening should be regarded as an efficient means of bringing the people of separate colonies into a common consciousness. The political events that preceded and intensified the Revolution greatly increased the sense of unity of interest, until the people of the new states were able to join in a national government. Then with the beginning of the nineteenth century another series of religious revivals strengthened the bond of sympathy and likemindedness.

The churches that stressed the necessity of personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as a divine Saviour from sin were classed as evangelical in distinction from denominations that stressed the sacraments as efficacious for salvation, or others that denied the necessity of atonement or sacrament for salvation. Evangelical Christianity was true to the faith of the fathers, tending in the more emotional groups to be evangelistic in method of approach to the unregenerate, organizing itself for missions among the people of the frontier and far abroad. Non-

evangelical Christianity of the liberal sort was critical, lukewarm in religious effort, neither evangelistic nor missionary, though conspicuously humanitarian. Catholics were sacramentarians, and High church Episcopalians and Lutherans had a similar alignment. A fair test of Protestant evangelicalism came with the organization of the Evangelical Alliance, started in England in 1846 and organized in America in 1867. That body was instituted to bring into closer fellowship and coöperation individuals of different denominations on a basis of spiritual unity. Without adopting any creed its founders affirmed their belief in the Bible, in the Trinity, and in Jesus Christ as an atoning Savior from sin. Such a foundation could not be acceptable to the most liberal groups of Unitarians and Universalists, and they remained outside the new organization. The Evangelical Alliance proved its value in creating a keener consciousness of the essential unity of evangelical churches, in making a deeper impression upon communities, and in preparing the way for associations of churches as well as of individuals.

The missionary opportunities of the nineteenth century and the obligation to establish Sunday schools and churches on the expanding frontiers produced a sense of the need of coöperation. Then were founded the denominational organizations which have functioned as distributors of religious literature and missionary and educational agencies. The Young Men's Christian Associations and the Woman's Christian Temperance Unions helped at the middle of the century to make people of different Christian affiliations feel the principles that animated them all. In trying to provide abundance of life, physically, mentally and socially, as well as spiritually, men and women of any Christian group could work together. Mutual acquaintance tended to break down denominational barriers. Sitting together around the same council table produced a consciousness of com-



mon problems. Kindred purposes stimulated coöperative undertakings.

The Young Men's Christian Association found a place in student circles in 1858. Out of that affiliation came the Student Volunteer Movement, designed to interest the college student in foreign missions as a life work. The results were far beyond anticipation in the accessions to the ranks of missionaries, and ultimately the movement broadened to include missionary service in America, but one of the by-products of the enterprise was an impetus to interdenominational organization and coöperation. Similar in effect was the Laymen's Movement, the Men and Religion Forward Movement, the Christian Endeavor Society, and the young people's missionary movements. The reform movements of the nineteenth century to which the churches were committed were still another encouragement to common endeavor.

Several methods have been tried to bring churches together. Congregationalists and Presbyterians united for missionary purposes at home and abroad in the early years of the nineteenth century. About the same time the Disciples of Christ preached the union of all Bible believers as Christians. Both movements were premature. In 1886 the Protestant Episcopal church championed the cause of church union, proposing a union of religious denominations on the basis of the Apostles and Nicene creeds as doctrinal statements, the Bible as the rule of faith, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the historic episcopate as the basis of organization. They hoped to enlist in the enterprise not only the Protestant churches but also the Catholic churches of Europe, and of course the Church of England. Their platform was adopted by the Lambeth Conference of pan-Eiscopalians in London and became famous as the Quadri-lateral. The Episcopalians believed themselves the natural mediators between Catholics and Protestants, but neither side responded as cordially as was hoped, though the over-

tures were repeated at intervals of time. In 1910 the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal church proposed a world conference on faith and order. In response more than thirty denominations and Christian organizations appointed commissions to coöperate, but after thirteen years little real progress had been made in spite of the leveling influences of the World War.

Meantime less ambitious methods of approach had been found feasible. The first was reunion within the denominational family of the children who had broken away from parental restraint. Before the nineteenth century was past Northern Presbyterians of the Old and New Schools were able to bury their differences and to reunite on the basis of the Westminster Confession of Faith which both revered. Some years later the parent body welcomed back the Cumberland Presbyterians, except for a recalcitrant few. Overtures between Northern and Southern Presbyterians gave hope of ultimate reunion between those bodies. Baptists and Free Baptists found their old theological differences no longer a barrier to reunion. The "Freewillers" had been anathema in the days of rigid Calvinism, but time had softened the rigor. The extreme democracy of both groups made local action necessary for the union of local churches, a process more difficult than a union of denominational missionary organizations or the reorganization of state conventions into a United Baptist Convention, as in Maine. Methodists achieved minor reunions, and planned a major reunion between North and South which was long in coming. Lutherans found it possible to get together in most cases after the shaking up of the World War.

Easy as such reunions might appear to outsiders, the obstacles in the way of reunion were sometimes prodigious. Past grievances made small groups sensitive; special principles seemed too important to lose sight of; particular names were too precious to give up. In some cases litigation to prevent transfer of church property

was resorted to by an irreconcilable remnant. Yet there was steady gain, accelerating as the years passed.

A second method of getting together involved an abandonment of denominational standards and a merging of denominational interests in a community church. Such union churches seemed ideal for a community with sparse population or in a suburban district just beginning to grow. It was hoped that through such organization the religious needs of the community might be met. In a few cases they were conspicuously successful, but they felt the lack of affiliation with other churches everywhere, lacked the stimulus to benevolence because they were out of contact with the great missionary enterprises, and in most cases tended to lose their vitality. To obviate this difficulty the Massachusetts Federation of Churches encouraged union churches to meet annually in association, an experiment that proved worth while, but such a practice was liable to lead to the development of another denomination, as it had in the case of the Disciples of Christ. The most satisfactory working arrangement was to create a denominational affiliation for the union church by securing temporary financial assistance from a denominational missionary board and receiving as pastor a missionary of that denomination. It was likely in such a case that the union church would eventually become a church of the denomination with which it was loosely affiliated.

The federated church was a local experiment designed to preserve existing denominational interests at the same time that union of activity was assured. Two or more local churches agreed to join forces for maintaining worship, jointly choosing and supporting a pastor, sometimes of a denomination different from either of the churches coöperating, and carrying on joint religious activities. Most such experiments failed through the weaknesses of human nature, but some of them persisted to success. In that case one of the local meeting houses was used for

religious purposes, and the other was converted into a parish house for social and community purposes. If it remained a typical federated church the constituent denominational organizations continued, new members joining the particular church of their choice and by virtue of that act becoming members of the federated church.

To most denominational leaders an amicable exchange of territory between denominations seemed preferable to federation. When one denomination had a strong church in one locality and a weak one in another place, it was deemed advisable to exchange the weak church with another denomination similarly circumstanced. Thus two weak churches were eliminated, and in each community a sturdy church survived which could take over the whole religious responsibility for the community, and neither denomination lost to the other. Yet in spite of the obvious advantages to religion not a few denominationalists criticised such a policy of the elimination of the weak.

Most promising of all endeavors to overcome the handicap of ecclesiastical divisions was the federation of churches on a larger scale. Local town and city federations were useful, but still broader organizations could lead the way for churches over a large territory. Non-conformists in England pioneered in the organization of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches (1896), with local federal councils in one hundred and thirty communities. The purpose of the federation was declared to be the coöperation of the evangelical free churches, their spiritual growth, the social application of religion, and the defense of the rights of the free churches. Federation was discussed in Scotland, and was tried out in the British colonies. It was becoming plain that denominations could get together for coöperation when they could not find a basis for organic union, and it was hoped that such coöperation after a time might obliterate divisional lines of dogma and ritual. Even in doctrine Christians of all kinds were magnifying their generic be-

liefs, like personal faith in Jesus as a divine Savior and Leader, the requirement of individual righteousness, and personal immortality, while denominational shibboleths were fading into the background.

In America pioneer experiments were made late in the nineteenth century, and a full-fledged state organization came into existence in 1902. The growing usefulness of these bodies recommended the federative movement, and within a few years it had gone far enough to warrant calling an interchurch conference with delegates from thirty-two denominations. Out of that conference came the definite organization of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. It had its first meeting at Philadelphia in 1908, and after that met quadrennially. The Federal Council was organized with five avowed objectives: to express the catholic unity of the Christian church—though non-Trinitarian bodies were not admitted—to secure united service, to encourage mutual counsel and inspiration, to enlarge the moral and spiritual influence of the churches, and to promote the organization of local federations. It was accepted as worth while by thirty evangelical denominations which gave approval, and eventually agreed to give it definite support. An executive committee meeting annually kept the wheels in motion, and various permanent committees gave their attention to evangelism, missions, and other prominent interests of the constituent churches.

Following the lines of least resistance and obeying the spirit of the time, the Federal Council put its major emphasis on social service. Appointing a commission of its own, it enjoyed the coöperation of the social service secretaries of the leading denominations, who constituted a secretarial council and were the backbone of the commission. Investigations were made into industrial situations and publicity given to the findings. Relations were established with various ameliorative agencies. Literature in large amounts was prepared and distributed for the



education of the church public. Temperance, marriage and divorce, Sunday observance, child labor, religious and moral education, immigration, and international arbitration passed in review. When the World War came, the Council vigorously joined in coöperation with other religious and moral agencies, and out of the war experience came several monographs on the church and social conditions, notably on industrial and international relations.

The function of the Federal Council was conceived to be not so much to accomplish results of itself as to stimulate other organizations to more efficient activity and to correlate their efforts. In the pursuance of that end the Council fostered the organization of state and local federations of churches, some of which have given initial promise of great usefulness, especially in large cities.

The gravest difficulties in the way of all kinds of co-operation and federation were the ignorance and prejudice of individuals or their firm conviction of the religious value, even necessity, of their own denomination. These personal feelings and convictions were reënforced by the vested interests of the denominations, which feared to lose money as well as prestige if their particular activities were not kept prominent. Churches had been maintained, sometimes for several generations, by the sacrifice and toil of devoted members and in some instances small churches had made valuable contribution to the leadership of the denomination through a son or daughter of the church gifted with vision and ability, and it was hard to surrender such a heritage. Then, too, denominations varied in their practice of democracy, and democracy was a principle endeared to the independent churches. Matters of belief played a smaller part than might have been expected, but they kept apart such groups as Congregationalists and Unitarians which once had been united.

About the time that the Federal Council was launched missionary coöperation took organized shape. Missionary education for young people, united study for women, and

a drive to interest laymen, were experiments that proved of permanent value. Foreign mission boards in America formed a conference, meeting regularly to facilitate co-ordination of missionary effort. In 1910 the most widely representative missionary conference that ever had been brought together met at Edinburgh, and six years later a Latin American conference met at Panama. In each case regional conferences followed in mission territory. For a hundred years English, American, and Continental Protestants had been sending their missionaries into the pagan lands of Africa and the East, and various American denominations had found place in Latin America. Each denomination had planted its own brand of seed corn, and it had grown up and borne fruit. But soil and climate<sup>n</sup> did not always prove suited to the seed. Cultivation was too intensive on certain areas. There were congested districts and at the same time vast areas scarcely touched by the plow. The ecumenical conferences made possible necessary adjustments, and gave a better perspective of the whole field.

While the missionary boards were finding closer mutual approach at home, the denominations were getting together in the mission territory. Orientals never sympathized strongly with the historic differences between Christian sects, and it was easy for them, first through processes of comity and coöperation, to join in federations of churches and in some cases in organic union. Several denominational bodies in India set the example, finding it relatively easy to unite missions of denominations with the same name from America and Great Britain, or with identical doctrines, like Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Japanese and Chinese Christians were not far behind in demanding united Christian bodies for those nations. In national conferences they found inspiration and fellowship and widened acquaintance. It appeared as if the East would set the pace for the West in the progress of Christian unity.

Contemporaneously a Home Missions Council attempted to correlate missionary undertakings in the United States. On overchurched territory readjustments were made that tempered earlier rivalries. In new sections an amicable allotment was made for religious work among both whites and Indians. Investigations were made into the question of immigration. Whole states were surveyed, and the surveys were published for a better understanding of the ecclesiastical and social situation. In the Far West eight denominations in 1911 organized the Pacific Coast Oriental Workers Association in the hope of adjusting work among Orientals on the shore where East and West had met. In Chicago the Coöperative Council of City Missions was formed to evangelize the foreign population of the city, to aid in maintaining churches in downtown districts, and to establish needed churches in the newer parts of the city.

The climax of federative effort was the attempt to organize an ambitious Interchurch Movement after the World War. Impelled by the tremendous changes that the war had wrought and by the unwholesome social and political conditions that were revealed, church leaders from different denominations met and planned a great enterprise which should first survey minutely American and foreign communities, take account of the ecclesiastical resources, and raise large sums of money to carry out the plans that were being made. General and regional conferences were held to enlist the sympathy and coöperation of ministers and churches and an expensive organization was inaugurated, but the public did not respond to the financial appeal, weary as it was from the drives of war funds, various forms of opposition arose, and the Movement found itself compelled to liquidate. In the opinion of its critics the enterprise might have had better success with wiser counsels and a less ambitious program.

The whole federative movement belongs to contemporary history, but it is an indication of a new spirit among

the churches. The tendency to get together is marked. It is rapid. It promises a new efficiency. It is not organic church union, but a step in that direction, and it is regarded as more practical, if less ideal.

Meanwhile the Catholic church, strong in its unchanging convictions and with the dignity and confidence of its age-long inheritance, went on its way, rather scornful of the divisions among Protestants. Powerful in its organization, dignified in its worship, discreet in its methods, it did its best to conserve the gains and to meet the responsibilities that came to it from the increasing immigration of Europeans of its own faith, and to extend its influence and organization from the cities where its natural strength lay into the rural communities where it had few adherents. In the city it built impressive groups of buildings, for churches, parochial schools, and other institutions. It received as its due the unquestioning loyalty of millions who trusted its assurances and reverently honored its saints and ministers. It attended its children from the cradle to the grave. It threw the sanctity of its marriage sacrament about the home. It taught its catechism to boys and girls in the Sunday school, and placed the foundations of religion under the system of its instruction in the parochial schools. It made its adherents realize their unity in the bonds of religion. It even knit together the Old World and the New in that same bond of unity. But there was no bond of unity with the Protestant or the Jew, and Catholics remained a minority of the population.

The religion of America does not present unity of faith or organization in this land of diversity. It shares the independent spirit that is so characteristic of American business and politics and society. Religion has freed itself from state control, reorganized itself on a voluntary denominational basis, evangelized the multitudes of American citizens that were fashioning the nation East and West, discovered its relations to a needy social order and to an expanding world of scientific ideas, and in the last

generation has been drawing together its forces in a new consciousness of the unity of Christian faith and purpose. While students of nature have been mastering forest and sea and glacier, extracting from the bowels of the earth its wealth of iron and copper and gold and coal and oil, harnessing the currents of air and electricity, and making fire and water do their bidding, students of religion have probed into the nature of God and man and have been learning the laws of spiritual force and the resources of divinity and humanity. Men have traveled a long way from an imminent nature to an immanent God.

Yet the religion of the churches reflects the conservative thinking of centuries long since gone. They are heirs of the Reformation theology. They have matured in a new environment, but they got their characteristic ideas from Europe. Back of the Reformation was a faith and order that bore the stamp of authority for nearly a thousand unquestioning centuries. It is not strange that Catholicism flourishes in America, that the attitude of the rank and file of Protestants towards new ways of religious thinking and functioning is conservative. For them the active spirit of America has ranged freely in industry and invention, in business expansion and the development of a nation's wealth, but their religion has been reluctant to break over the boundaries that were set for it by their ancestors. The result is that two conceptions of religion are held in America to-day. One thinks of religion in terms of pacifying an alien God. By penitence or penance, by sorrow and suffering for sin, by sacrament or sacrifice, by the way of the Cross and the narrow way of self-restraint one may hope to be reconciled with God and make his way to the Holy City. The other conception is that religion is not a passport to Heaven but a potency that makes life rich and full in the present, a process of growth in grace and divine knowledge. God is light and love and liberty, not a Shylock in the heavens eternally demanding his pound of flesh.

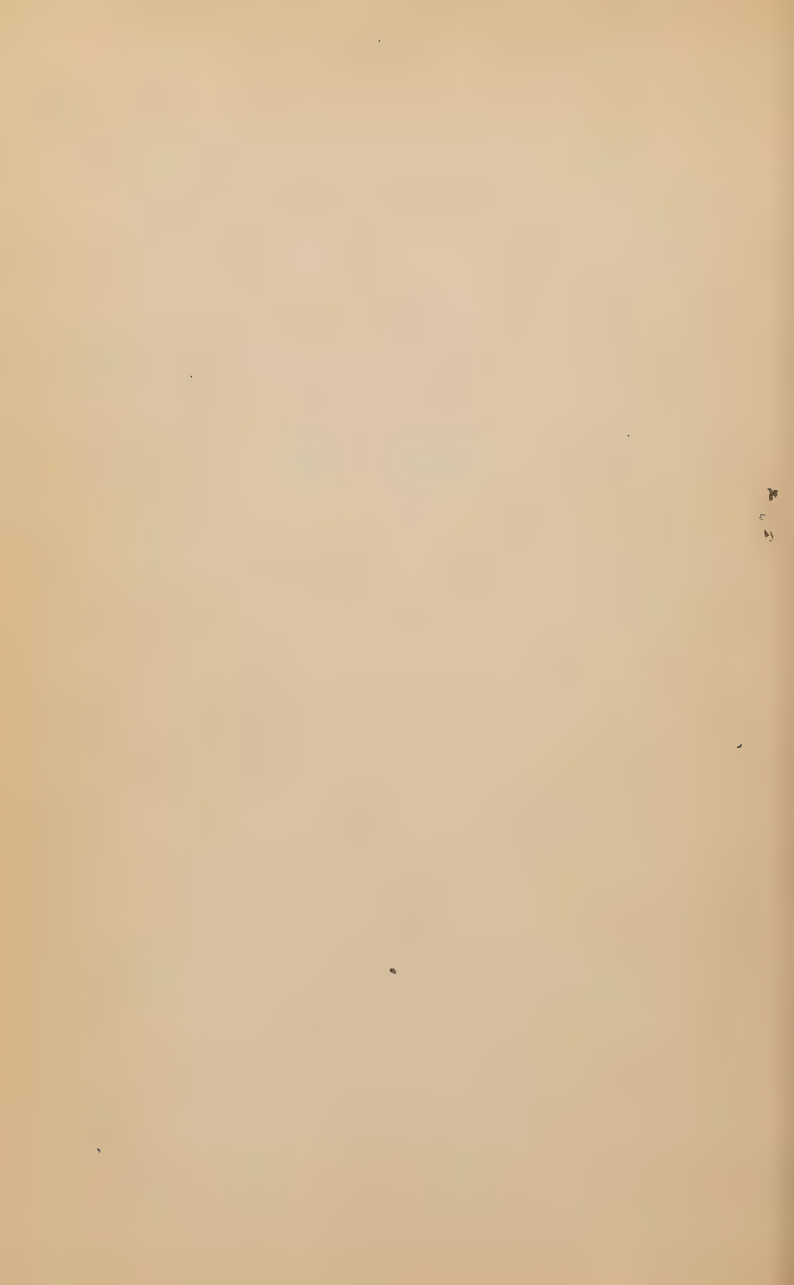


It has been difficult for each of these conceptions to be reconciled to each other. The church mind has not been able to escape from the influence of modern thought. It has felt it in a revulsion from the harshness of the Calvinistic theology, felt it in a fresh study of the life of Jesus and the history of religion, felt it in the widening impact of natural science, until the theology of the average Christian has become less dogmatic. Yet the church has changed little of the content of its theology. As a consequence the minority who have escaped from the old limitations so completely as to see in them a hurt rather than a help to religion are impatient with the slow progress that has been achieved. In their reliance upon larger ideas about religion they have not always remembered to practice the mystic presence of God. They think efficiently, but they are deficient in feeling. In their assurance of the divine good will they have been in danger sometimes of forgetting the fact of sin and its dire consequences in warping the very nature of man so that he can not find God.

Both conservatives and progressives have yet to learn that a religion of high value must be enlightening to the individual mind, must be constructive of personal character, must knit man to God in a conscious personal relationship, and must promote a purposeful and efficient social will, and that it must do this for every last man. Man does not yet adequately comprehend God; he does not yet serve adequately his fellows. To present day America have come freedom and a growing sense of power to achieve, never equaled before anywhere, but with these has come a feeling of disillusionment and a craving for higher satisfactions. With this growing consciousness and desire human thought is turning to religion to point the way and to the church to lead the march to the goal. In spite of distrust of old satisfactions, of forms of belief and organization that have clogged so often the wheels of progress, there is an inescapable conviction that re-

ligion alone can save the race from its low ideals and unworthy purposes, that the Christian church reinvigorated and redirected can consecrate the personal and the social will to the task of finding at the end of the road the holy grail. In that pilgrimage the American churches are best fitted to lead the way, but they need leaders of clear vision, wise judgment, and fearless faith.

As surely as the Norse Vikings sighted the prow of a new continent in their adventures into unknown seas, so surely will men of high courage sight promontories of knowledge and attainment in their ventures of faith, for on the small stage of human history are rehearsed the greater dramas of the far-ranging spirit.



## INDEX

- Abbott, Lyman, 131  
 Academies, 109  
 American Home Missionary Society, 80  
 American Sunday School Union, 82  
 Andover Seminary, 110, 127, 135, 147  
 Anti-Saloon League, 96  
 A. P. A., 118  
 Arminianism, 46, 63, 126, 134  
 Associations of churches, 62, 180, 185  
 Authority in religion, 12, 16, 17, 37, 38  
  
 Baltimore, Lord, 38  
 Baptism, 121, 175  
 Baptists, 15, 34, 36, 41, 45, 50, 63, 68, 70, 80, 99, 101, 107, 175, 180, 186, 197  
 Beecher, H. W., 131  
 Beecher, Lyman, 62, 96  
 Bellamy, Joseph, 49  
 Bible societies, 111  
 Biblical criticism, 135, 137  
 Bill of Rights, 51  
 Blair, 14  
 Boston, 46, 49, 127, 128, 161  
 Bradford, William, 23  
 Bray, Thomas, 14  
 Brewster, William, 23  
 Bright, John, 91  
 Brotherhood of the Kingdom, 150  
 Browne, Robert, 21, 25  
 Brownists, 21, 36  
 Bushnell, Horace, 129  
 Business Ethics, 148  
  
 Caaba at Mecca, 28  
 Calvinism, 19, 22, 36, 45, 47, 129, 134  
  
 Cambridge Synod, 46  
 Campbell, Alexander, 183  
 Camp meetings, 65  
 Canada, 7  
 Cane Ridge, 65  
 Carolina, 15, 60  
 Carroll, John, 118  
 Catholics, 1, 7, 35, 38, 39, 41, 51, 55, 66, 68, 83, 110, 117-119, 156, 163, 176, 185, 204  
 Chalmers, Thomas, 90  
 Channing, W. E., 129  
 Charity organization, 91, 146  
 Charters, 27, 35, 45  
 Chauncy, Charles, 48, 106  
 Chautauqua, 113, 155  
 Christian Commission, 102  
 Christian Connection, 184  
 Christian Science, 159, 160  
 Church, The, 107, 142, 145, 156, 164, 174, 176, 185, 189  
 Church covenant, 25  
 Church membership, 12, 25, 41, 45, 53, 104, 175, 190  
 Church of England, 12, 13, 15, 20, 25, 38, 39, 65  
 Church union, 202  
 Cities, 88, 142, 147  
 City missions, 153, 203  
 Clark, Francis E., 179  
 Clarke, John, 35, 36  
 Clarkson, Thomas, 90  
 Colleges, 14, 81, 109, 168  
 Colonization, 9  
 Colporteurs, 111  
 Columbus, 2  
 Commissaries, 14  
 Compulsory religion, 12, 51  
 Community churches, 198  
 Conflict between science and theology, 133  
 Congregationalists, 21, 23, 25, 36, 37, 47, 50, 68, 120, 185, 187

- Connecticut, 36, 37, 45  
 Conservatism, 87, 115, 170, 171, 192, 206  
 Cooperation, 195  
 Cotton, John, 43  
 Country Life Commission, 154  
 Cumberland Presbyterians, 65, 115  
  
 Democracy, 39, 54, 78, 86, 114  
 Denominationalism, 56, 68, 193  
 Denominations, 184  
 Disciples, 174, 183, 184, 196  
 Disestablishment, 65  
 Dissent, 12, 15, 16, 40, 50, 51  
 Dunkards, 40  
 Dunster, Henry, 36  
 Dutch, 9, 11, 38, 39, 40, 181  
 Dwight, Timothy, 62  
  
 Eddy, Mary Baker, 161  
 Education, 67, 107-110  
 Education, Religious, 107-111, 114  
 Edwards, Jonathan, 46, 48, 105, 160  
 Emmanuel Movement, 161  
 Emerson, R. W., 129  
 Episcopalians, 13, 45, 57, 68, 101, 121, 127, 150, 164, 174, 176, 181, 185, 196  
 Evangelism, 48, 58, 61, 66, 142  
 Evangelical Alliance, 195  
 Evangelicalism, 194  
 Evolution, 132  
 Exchange of territory between denominations, 199  
 Expansion, 29, 32, 59, 105  
  
 Factory, 91  
 Faith cure, 161  
 Fanaticism, 118  
 Federal Council of Churches, 151, 200, 201  
 Federated churches, 198  
 Federation of churches, 199  
 Foreign missions, 69, 153, 202  
 Forum, Open, 151  
 Fox, George, 15, 39  
 Franciscans, 7  
 Free Baptists, 94, 107, 197  
  
 French, 7, 9  
 Friends, see Quakers  
 Frontier, 72, 75  
  
 General Court of Massachusetts, 26, 44  
 Georgia, 16  
 Germans, 16, 84, 181  
 Going, Jonathan, 80  
 Government, 147  
 Grand Banks, 2  
 Great Awakening, 60, 194  
 Greenland, 1  
  
 Half-way Covenant, 41, 42, 43  
 Hall, Robert, 90  
 Harvard College, 30, 36, 44, 46, 109, 127  
 Home Missions Council, 87, 203  
 Home Missions, 76, 78, 79, 80, 83, 84, 85, 153  
 Hooker, Thomas, 36, 43  
 Howard, John, 90  
 Huguenots, 16  
 Humanism, 8  
 Humanitarianism, 93  
 Hutchinson, Ann, 26, 33  
 Hymnody, 165  
  
 Immigration, 84, 153, 182  
 Immorality, 43, 76  
 Independents, 20, 22, 36  
 Indians, 3, 7, 27, 33, 35, 38, 47, 60, 61, 62, 83, 93, 203  
 Individualism, 86  
 Institutional church, 152  
 Interchurch Movement, 157, 203  
 Internationalism, 155  
  
 Jesuits, 7, 38  
 Jews, 119, 120  
 Johnson, 26  
  
 Kemper, Bishop, 81  
 King's Chapel, 45, 127  
 Know Nothing Movement, 118  
  
 Labor problem, 148-151  
 Labor unions, 91, 93  
 Latin America, 84, 202  
 Laymen, 177



Legislation, 26, 27, 28, 41, 49  
 Liberal orthodoxy, 130  
 Liberty churches, 156  
 Log college, 61, 110  
 London Missionary Society, 68  
 Luther, 6  
 Lutherans, 11, 40, 84, 182, 197

Magistrates, 26, 33  
 Maryland, 14, 15, 38  
 Massachusetts, 17, 32, 36, 37, 41,  
 46, 48, 50, 61  
 Massachusetts Bay Company, 24  
 Massachusetts Federation of  
 Churches, 198

Mather, Cotton, 44, 46  
 Mather, Increase, 43, 44, 46  
 Mathew, Father, 91  
 Mayflower Compact, 22  
 Mayhew, Jonathan, 49  
 Meeting-house, 29, 189  
 Mennonites, 40  
 Methodists, 16, 60, 63, 68, 90,  
 99, 101, 112, 160, 177, 181,  
 187, 197

Methodist Book Concern, 112  
 Middle colonies, 38  
 Migration, 72, 77  
 Millerites, 115  
 Ministerial education, 61  
 Ministers, 13, 14, 15, 25, 26, 29,  
 37, 46, 48, 58, 76, 92, 102,  
 151, 176, 190

Missions, 7, 67, 69  
 Missionary conferences, 202  
 Missionary societies, 14, 57, 69,  
 79, 85  
 Modernism, 129, 136, 171, 172,  
 206

Moravians, 40, 162  
 Mormons, 117  
 Mountain Whites, 65  
 Movements, 196  
 Muhlenberg, H. M., 182  
 Music, 164  
 Mysticism, 159

Neglect of religion, 13  
 Negroes, 84, 97, 103, 188  
 New England theology, 48, 129  
 New Haven, 37

New Jersey, 38  
 New Lights, 61  
 Newport, 36  
 Newspapers, 112, 184  
 New Testament, 8, 36  
 New Thought, 159  
 New York, 38, 95  
 Norsemen, 1  
 North, The, 102  
 Northampton, 46

Oriental, 64, 202, 203  
 Overchurching, 87

Paine, Thomas, 62  
 Palatines, 40  
 Penn, William, 39  
 Pennsylvania, 39, 64, 95  
 Pennsylvania Dutch, 40  
 Persecution, 10, 18, 27  
 Philanthropy, 67, 145  
 Pietists, 40  
 Pilgrims, 21, 22  
 Plan of union, 68, 79  
 Planter's Plea, 24  
 Plymouth, 22, 23, 25  
 Plymouth Rock, 28  
 Prayer meeting, 161, 163  
 Presbyterians, 15, 50, 57, 61, 68,  
 96, 98, 101, 120, 150, 181,  
 197

Primitive Baptists, 70, 115  
 Princeton College, 48, 61  
 Prison reform, 94, 95  
 Providence, 33, 35  
 Psychology of religion, 169  
 Publishing houses, 112  
 Puritanism, 17, 25, 28, 123  
 Puritans, 11, 15, 17, 18, 20, 24,  
 27, 28, 36, 38, 39, 50, 108, 160,  
 176  
 Puritan home, 30

Quakers, 15, 27, 39, 40, 41, 45,  
 50, 94, 95, 98, 156, 159

Reason, 132, 137  
 Reformation, 6, 10  
 Reformed churches, 11, 40,  
 181  
 Reforming Synod, 44

- Reforms, 90, 147, 148  
 Religion a function of govern-  
   ment, 12  
 Religious customs, 92  
 Religious Education Association,  
   114, 169  
 Religious experience, 136, 158  
 Religious liberty, 26, 32, 34, 35,  
   36, 38, 39, 41, 45, 49, 51  
 Religious life, 124  
 Religious literature, 166  
 Religious mind, 105, 111, 125  
 Religious press, 112  
 Rescue missions, 143  
 Reunion of denominations, 197  
 Reviews, 112  
 Revivals, 46, 58, 60, 63, 64, 66,  
   142, 163  
 Revolution, 16, 49, 62  
 Rhode Island, 33, 35, 51  
 Robinson, John, 21  
 Rural churches, 154, 155  
  
 Salaries, 13  
 Salem, 24, 25  
 Salvation Army, 144  
 Sanitary Commission, 102  
 Savoy Confession, 44  
 Schwenkfelders, 41  
 Science, 132-135, 160, 169  
*Science and Health*, 161  
 Scotch-Irish, 64, 75  
 Sectional divisions, 101  
 Sects, 87  
 Seekers, 34, 56  
 Separation of church and state,  
   50  
 Separatists, 21  
 Shakers, 116  
 Skraellings, 2  
 Slavery, 96-102  
 Social Christianity, 149  
 Social creed, 151  
 Social life, 4, 5, 141  
 Social science, 144, 169  
 Social service, 200  
 Social Service Commissions, 150,  
   151  
 Social settlements, 146  
 Society for the Promotion of  
   Christian Knowledge, 14  
 Society for the Propagation of  
   the Gospel, 14  
 Socinianism, 126  
 South, The, 15, 16, 28, 59, 62,  
   63, 64, 84 97, 188  
 Spain, 2, 5, 7, 9  
 Spiritualism, 116  
 Spiritual religion, 167, 172  
 Standing order, 27  
 State universities, 110  
 Statistics, 191  
 Stoddard, Solomon, 46  
 Stoddardeanism, 47  
 Student Volunteers, 196  
 Sunday observance, 26, 30, 43,  
   123, 141  
 Sunday schools, 82, 113  
 Swedenborg, 116  
 Swedes, 9, 11, 84  
  
 Taxation, 26, 37, 38, 49, 51 14  
 Temperance, 96  
 Temples, 143  
 Tennent, William, 61  
 Theocracy, 26, 42  
 Theological seminaries, 110, 152,  
   191  
 Theology, 47, 106, 107, 130, 131,  
   136-140  
 Tract societies, 82, 111  
 Trusteesism, 118  
  
*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 101  
 Undenominational organizations,  
   195  
 Unitarians, 49, 94, 107, 126-129  
 United Brethren, 183  
 Unity, 132  
 Universalists, 49, 107, 130  
  
 Virginia, 12, 13, 15, 32, 38, 50  
 Voluntarism, 21, 25, 52  
  
 Wesley, John, 60, 63  
 West, The, 75, 78, 80, 82, 88  
 Western Reserve, 81  
 Westminster Confession, 46  
 White, John, 24  
 Whitefield, George, 60  
 Whitman, Marcus, 81  
 Wilberforce, William, 90

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Williams, Roger, 26, 33, 34,<br>51          | Yale College, 46, 62, 109                              |
| Winthrop, John, 24, 43                      | Young Men's Christian Associa-<br>tion, 143, 155, 196  |
| Women, 96, 178                              | Young People, 179, 190                                 |
| <i>Wonder-working Providence</i> , 26       | Young People's Society of Chris-<br>tian Endeavor, 179 |
| World Conference on Faith and<br>Order, 197 | Young Women's Christian Asso-<br>ciation, 143, 152     |
| World War, 155, 156, 201                    |  |

















